THE
Barren Fig-tree:
OR,
The Doom and Downfal of the Fruitless Professor.

Shewing,

That the Day of Grace may be past with him long before his Life is ended.

The Signs also by which such miserable Mortals may be known.

By *John Bunyan*.

And now also the Ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down, and cast into the fire; Matth. 3. 10.

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TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

I *Have Written to thee now about the* Barren Fig-tree, *or how it will fare with the* Fruitless Professor, *that standeth in the* Vineyard *of God.*

To the Reader.

Of what Complexion thou art, I cannot certainly divine, but the Parable tells thee, that the Cumber-ground *must be cut down.*

A Cumber-ground *Professor, is not only a provocation to* God, *a stumbling-block to the* World, *and a blemish to* Religion, *but a snare to his own Soul also. Though his* excellency *mount up to the Heavens, and his* Head *reach unto the* Clouds, *yet he shall perish for ever, like his own dung, they that have seen him,*

him, shall say, where is he? Job 20. 6.

Now they count it pleasure to riot in the day-time, but what will they do when the Ax is fetcht out. 2 Pet. 2. 13, 14.

The Tree whose Fruit withereth, is reckoned a tree without fruit, a tree twice *dead, one that must be plutkt up by the roots.* Jude 12.

O thou Cumberground, *God expects fruit, God will come seeking fruit shortly.*

My Exhortation therefore is to Professors, that they

they look to it, that they take heed.

The Barren Fig-tree *in the* Vineyard, *and the* Bramble *in the* Wood, *are both prepared for the* Fire.

Profession is not a Covert *to hide from the eye of God, nor will it palliate the revengeful threatning of his Justice, he will command to cut it down shortly.*

The Church *and a* Profession, *are the best of places for the* Upright; *but the worst in the world for the* Cumber-ground:

He

He must be cast, as profane, out of the Mount of God; *Cast, I say, over the wall of the* Vineyard, *there to wither; thence to be gathered and burned.* It had been better for them that they had not known the way of Righteousness; *And yet if they had not, they had been damned; but it is better to go to Hell without, than in, or from under a Profession;* These shall receive greater Damnation. Ezek. 28 15 Joh. 15. 16 2 Pet. 2. 21 Luk. 20. 47.

If thou be a Professor, *read and tremble; If thou*

be Profane, *do so likewise*. For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and Sinners appear? Cumber-ground, *Take heed of the* Ax; Barren Fig-tree, *beware of the Fire*.

But I will keep thee no longer out of the Book; Christ Jesus, *the Dresser of the* Vine-yard, *take care of thee, dig about thee, and dung thee, that thou maist bear* Fruit: *That when the Lord of the* Vineyard *cometh with his* Ax *to seek for* Fruit,

or

or pronounce the Sentence of Damnation on the Barren Fig-tree, *thou maist escape that judgment. The* Cumber-ground *must to the* Wood-pile, *and thence to the* Fire.

Farewel,

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity, *Amen.*

J. Bunyan.

Books lately printed for Jonathan Robinson.

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THE Barren Fig-tree:

Or,

The Doom and Downfall of the fruitless Professor.

Luke 13. 6, 7, 8, 9.

A certain man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the Dresser of his Vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this Fig-

tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground. And he answering, said, Lord, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear Fruit, well: And if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

AT the beginning of this Chapter, we read, how some of the *Jews* came to *Jesus Christ*, to tell him of the cruelty of *Pontius Pilate*, in mingling the blood of the *Galileans* with their Sacrifices. An Heathenish and prodigious Act. For therein he shewed, not only his Malice,

Malice against the *Jewish* Nation, but also against their Worship, and consequently, their God. An action, I say, not only Heathenish, but prodigious also; for the Lord *Jesus paraphrasing* upon this fact of his, teacheth the *Jews*, that without Repentance, *they should all* likewise *perish*. *Likewise*, that is, by the hand and rage of the *Roman* Empire: Neither should they be more able to avoid the stroke, than were those *eighteen upon whom the Tower of* Siloam *fell, and slew them:* the fulfilling of which *Prophecy*, for their hardness of Heart, and impenitency, was in the days of *Titus* Son of *Vespasian*, about *forty* years after the Death of Christ. Then, I say, were these

Luke 19. 42, 43, 44.

1 *Thes.* 2. 16.

theſe *Jews*, and their City both, environed round on every ſide, wherein both they and it, to amazement, were miſerably overthrown. God gave them Sword, and Famine, Peſtilence, and Blood, for their outrage againſt the Son of his Love: So *wrath came on them to the uttermoſt.*

Now to prevent their old and fooliſh *Salvo*, which they alwaies had in readineſs againſt ſuch *Prophecies* and Denunciations of Judgment, the Lord *Jeſus* preſents them with this *Parable*, in which he *emphatically* ſhews them, that their cry of being the *Temple of the Lord*, and of their being the Children of *Abraham* &c. and their being the Church of God, would not ſtand them in

any ſtead. As who ſhould ſay, It may be you think to help your ſelves againſt this my *Prophecy*, of your utter and unavoidable overthrow, by the intereſt which you have in your outward Priviledges; *But all theſe will fail you*; for what think you, *A certain man had a* Fig-tree *planted in his Vineyard, and he came and ſought fruit thereon, and found none.* This is your caſe, The *Jewiſh* Land is Gods Vineyard, I know it; and I know alſo, that *you are the Fig-trees.* But behold, there wanteth the main thing *fruit*, for the ſake and in expectation of which, he ſet this Vineyard with trees. Now, ſeing the *fruit* is not found amongſt you; the fruit, I ſay, for the ſake

of which he at first did plant this Vineyard; what remains, but that in Justice he command to cut you down, *as those that cumber the ground*, that he may plant himself another Vineyard. *Then said he to the Dresser of his Vineyard, Behold, these* three *years I come seeking fruit on this Fig-tree, and finde none; cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground?* This therefore must be your end, although you are planted in the Garden of God, for the barrenness and unfruitfulness of your Hearts and Lives, you must be cut off, yea rooted up, and cast out of the Vineyard.

In *Parables* there are *two things* to be taken notice of, and to be enquired into of them that read; *First*,

First, The *Metaphors* made use of. 1.

Secondly, The Doctrine, or *Mysteries* couched under such *Metaphors*. 2.

The *Metaphors* in this *Parable* are; (1.) A certain man. (2.) A Vineyard. (3.) A Fig-tree, barren or fruitless. (4.) A Dresser. (5.) Three years. (6.) Digging and Dunging, *&c.*

The *Doctrine*, or Mystery, couched under these words, is to shew us, *What is like to become of a fruitless*, or *Formal Professor*; for

1. By the *Man* in the *Parable*, is meant *God* * *the Father*. * Luk. 15. 11.

2. By the *Vineyard*, his † *Church*. † Isa. 5. 7.

3. By the *Fig-tree*, a *Professor*.

4. By the Dreſſer, *The Lord Jeſus.*

5. By the *Fig-trees* Barrenneſs, *The Profeſſors fruitleſneſs.*

6. By the *three* years, *the patience of God, that for a time he extendeth to barren Profeſſors.*

7. This calling to the Dreſſer of the Vineyard *to cut it down,* is to ſhew, *the outcries of Juſtice againſt fruitleſs Profeſſors.* Iſa. 53. 12.

8. The *Dreſſers* interceding, is to ſhew, *how the Lord Jeſus ſteps in, and takes hold of the head of his Father's Ax,* to ſtop, or at leaſt to defer preſent execution againſt a barren *Fig-tree.*

9. The *Dreſſers* deſire to try to make the *Fig-tree* fruitful, is to ſhew you,

How

How unwilling he is that ever a barren Fig-tree, ſhould yet be barren, and periſh.

10. His digging about it, and dunging of it, is to ſhew *his willingneſs to apply Goſpel-helps to this barren Profeſſor*, if happily he may be fruitful.

11. The Suppoſition that the *Fig-tree* may yet continue fruitleſs, is to ſhew, that when Chriſt Jeſus hath done all, *There are ſome Profeſſors will abide barren and fruitleſs.* Mat. 3.10.

12. The Determination upon this Suppoſition, at laſt to cut it down, *Is a certain prediction of ſuch Profeſſors unavoidable and eternal Damnation.*

But to take this *Parable* into pieces, and to diſcourſe

more particularly, though with all *brevity*, upon all the parts thereof.

A certain man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard.

The Man, I told you, is to present us with God the Father, by which *Similitude* He is often set out in the *New-Testament*.

Observe then, That it is no new thing, if you find in God's Church, *barren Fig-trees*, fruitless Professors; even as here you see is a *tree*, a fruitless tree, a fruitless *Fig-tree* in the Vineyard. Fruit is not *so easily* brought forth, as a Profession is *got into*; 'tis easie for a man to cloath himself with a fair show in the flesh, to word

it,

it, and say, be thou warmed and filled with the best. 'Tis no hard thing to do, these with other things; but to be *fruitful*, to bring forth *fruit to God*, this doth not *every* tree; No not every *fig tree*, that stands in the Vine-yard *of God*. Them words also, [*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away,*] assert the same thing. There are branches in Christ, in Christ's Body mystical, (which is his Church, his Vine-yard) that beareth not fruit, wherefore the hand of God is to take them away. *I looked for Grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes*, that is, no fruit at all that was acceptable with God. Again, *Israel is an empty Vine, he bringeth forth fruit* unto

Joh. 15. 2.

Isa. 5. 4.

Hos. 10. 1.

unto himself, none to God; he is without fruit to God. All these, with many more, shew us the truth of the Observation, and that God's Church may be cumbered with fruitless Fig-trees, with barren Professors.

Had a [Fig-tree.]

Although there be in God's Church that be barren and fruitless; yet, as I said, *to see to in appearance*, they are like the rest of the trees, even a *Fig-tree*: 'Twas not an *oak*, nor a *willow*, nor a *thorn*, nor a *bramble*, but a *Fig-tree*. *They come before thee as the people cometh; they delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinances of their*

Ezek. 33. 30, 31. Isa. 58. 1, 2, 3, 4.

their God; they ask of me the ordinances of Justice, they take delight in approaching to God; And yet but barren, fruitless, and unprofitable Professors. *Judas* also was one of the *twelve*, a *Disciple*, an *Apostle*, a *Preacher*, an *Officer*, yea, and *such* an one also, as none of the *eleven* mistrusted, but preferred before themselves, each one crying out *Is it I? is it I?* Mar. 14. 19 none of them, as we read of, mistrusting *Judas*, yet Joh. 6. 70. he in Christ's eyes was the *barren Fig-tree*, a Devil, a fruitless Professor. The foolish Virgins also went forth of the world with the other, had Lamps, and Light, and were awakened with the other; yea had boldness to go forth when the Midnight cry

cry was made with the other; and thought that they could have looked Christ in the face, when he sat upon the Throne of Judgment, with the other; and yet but *foolish*, but *barren* Fig-trees, but fruitless Professors: *Many*, saith Christ, *will say unto me in that day, this and that*, and will also talk of many wonderful works; yet, behold, he finds nothing in them, but the *fruits* of unrighteousness; they were altogether barren and fruitless Professors.

Mat. 7. 22, 23.

Luk. 13. 26, 27.

Hail a Fig-tree [planted]

This word [*planted*] doth also reach far; It supposeth one taken out of its natural Soil, or removed from the

place

place it grew in once; one that ſeemed to be called, awakened; and not only ſo, but by ſtrong hand carried *from the world*, to the Church; *from nature*, to Grace; *from ſin*, to Godlineſs. *Thou* Pſal. 80. 8. *broughteſt a Vine out of* Egypt, *thou didſt caſt out the heathen and plant it.* Of ſome of the Branches of this Vine, were there unfruitful Profeſſors.

It muſt be concluded therefore, That this Profeſſor (that remaineth notwithſtanding fruitleſs) is, as to the view and judgment of the Church, rightly brought in thither; to wit, by Confeſſion of Faith, of Sin, *and a ſhew of Repentance* and Regeneration, (thus falſe Brethren creep in unawares.)

All

All these things this word, *Planted*, intimateth; yea further, that the Church is satisfied with them, consents they should abide in the garden, and counteth them sound as the rest. But before God, in the sight of God, they are graceless Professors, *barren and fruitless Fig-trees.*

Therefore it is one thing to be *IN the Church*, or in a Profession; and another to be *OF the Church*, & to belong to that Kingdom, that is prepared for the Saint, that is so indeed. Otherwise, *being planted, shall it prosper, shall it not utterly wither, when the East wind toucheth it? It shall wither in the Furrows where it grew.*

Ezek. 17. 10.

Had

Had a Fig-tree planted in [his] *Vine-yard.*

In [*his*] Vineyard. Hypocrites, with rotten hearts, are not afraid to come before God in *Sion*. These words therefore suggest unto us, a prodigious kind of boldness and hardened Fearlessness: For what presumption higher, and what attempt more desperate, than for a man that wanteth Grace, and the true Knowledg of God, to croud himself (in that condition) into the House, or Church of God; or to make profession of, and desire that the name of God should be called upon him?

For the man that maketh a Profession of the Religion of Jesus Christ, that man hath

Dan. 9. 19. hath, as it were, *put the name*
chap. 36. *of God upon himself*, and is
20, 21, 22. called and reckoned now,
& 2. 39. (how fruitless soever before God, or men) the man that hath to do with God, the man that God owneth, and will stand for. This man, I say, by his Profession suggesteth this to all that know him, to be such a Professor. Men meerly natural, I mean, men that have not got the *devilish* art of Hypocrisie, are afraid to think of doing thus,
Act. 5. 13. *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them, but the people magnified them.* And indeed it displeaseth God, *They have brought*, saith he,
Isa. 1. 12. *men uncircumcised into my Sanctuary.* And again, *When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at*

your

your hand, to tread my Courts? *ſaith God.* They have therefore learnt this boldneſs of none in the viſible world, they only took it of the Devil; for he, and he only (with theſe his Diſciples) attempt to preſent themſelves in the Church before God. *The tares are the children of the wicked one*; the *Tares*, that is, the Hypocrites that are Satans brood, the generation of Vipers, that cannot eſcape the Damnation of Hell.

Job 1. 6. & 2. 1. Mat. 13. 25-38. & 23. 33.

[Had] *a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard.*

He doth not ſay, *He planted a Fig-tree*, but there was *a Fig-tree there*, he had, or *found*, a Fig-tree planted in his Vine-yard.

The

The great God will *not* acknowledg the *barren Fig-tree*, or barren Professor to be his workmanship; or a tree of *his* bringing in; only the Text saith, He had one there. This is much like
Mat. 15.13 that in *Matthew*, *Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.* Here again are Plants in his vineyard, which God will not acknowledg to be of his planting: and he seems to suggest, that in his Vineyard there are many such —— *Every plant*, or all those Plants, or Professors that are got into the Assembly of the Saints, or into the Profession of their Religion, without God and his Grace, *shall be rooted up.*

And when the King came

in

in to see the Guests, he saw there a man that had not on a Wedding-garment, and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a Wedding-garment? Here is one so cunning and crafty, that he beguiled all the Guests; he got and kept in the Church, even until *the King himself came in to see the Guests*; but his subtilty got him nothing. It did not blind the eyes of the King; it did not *pervert the judgment of the Righteous. Friend, how camest thou in hither?* did overtake him at last; even a publick rejection: the King discovered him in the face of all there present. *How camest thou in hither?* My Father did not bring thee hither, I did not bring thee hither, Mat. 22. 11, 12.

hither, My Spirit did not bring thee hither, thou art not of the Heavenly Father's planting, how *camest thou in hither?*

Joh. 10.1. *He that cometh not in by the Door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a Thief and a Robber.* This *Text* also is full, and plain to our purpose; for *this* man *came not* in by the *door*, yet got into the *Church*, he got in by climbing; he broke in at the windows, he got something of the light and glory of the Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ* in his head; and so (hardy wretch that he was) he presumed to croud himself among the children. But how is this resented? what saith the King of him? Why this is his sign, *The same is*

a

a Thief and a Robber. See ye here also, if all they be owned as the planting of God, that get into his Church, or Profession of his Name.

Had a Fig tree, had one without a Wedding-garment, had a thief in his garden, at his wedding, in his house. These climbed up some other way. There are *many* waies to get into the Church of God, and Profession of his Name, besides, and without an entring by the door.

1. There is the way of *lying* and *dissembling*, and at *this gap* the * *Gibeonites* got in. 2. There is sometimes falsness amongst *some* Pastors, either for the sake of carnal Relations, or the like; *at this hole, Tobiah* the enemy of God got in. 3. There is some-

* Josh. 9. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Neh. 13. 4, 5, 6.

ſometimes *negligence*, and too much uncircumſpectneſs in the whole Church, thus the * uncircumciſed got in.

* Eze. 44. 7-9.

4. Sometimes again, let the Church be *never ſo circumſpect*, yet *theſe* have ſo much help from the Devil, that *they* beguile them all, *and ſo get in*. Theſe are of that ſort of Thieves that *Paul* complains of; *falſe Brethren brought in* † *unawares*. *Jude* alſo cries out of theſe, *certain men* * *crept in unawares*. *Crept in*, What! were they ſo lowly! A voluntary humility, a neglecting of the † body, not in any humor. Oh; how ſeemingly ſelf-denying are ſome of theſe creeping things, that yet are to be held, (as we ſhall know them) an * abomination to *Iſrael*.

† Gal. 2. 3, 4.

* Jude 4.

† Col. 2. 22, 23.

* Lev. 11. 43, 44.

Bu

But in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour. By these words the Apostle seems to take it for granted, that as there *hath* been, so there still *will* be, these kind of Fig-trees, *these* barren Professors in the house, when all men have done what they can; *Even as in a great house, there are alwaies vessels to dishonour*, as well as those to honour and glory; vessels of wood, and of earth, as well as of *Silver* and *Gold*: So then there must be *wooden* Professors in the Garden of God, there must be *earthy, earthen* Professors in his Vineyard; but that methinks is the biting

2 Tim. 2. 20.

word, *and ſome to diſhonour.*
Rom. 9. 21,22. *That* to the *Romans* is dreadful, but *this* ſeems to go beyond it; *That* ſpeaks but of the Reprobate in general, but *this* of ſuch and ſuch in particular. *That* ſpeaks of their hardening but in the common way; But *this*, that they muſt be ſuffered to creep into the Churth; There to fit themſelves for their place,
* Act 1.25 their * own place, the place prepared for them of *this ſort only*. As the Lord Jeſus ſaid once of the *Phariſees*,
† Luke 20. 47. *Theſe ſhall receive* † *greater damnation.*

Barren Fig-tree, fruitleſs Profeſſor, Haſt thou heard all theſe things? Haſt thou conſidered that this *Fig-tree* is not acknowledged of God to be his, but is denyed to be

be of his Planting, and of his bringing unto his Wedding? Doſt not thou ſee thou art called a *Thief*, and a *Robber*, that haſt either *climbed* up to, or *crept* in at another place than the door? Doſt thou not hear, that there will be in God's houſe, *wooden* and *earthly* Profeſſors, and that no place will ſerve to fit thoſe for Hell, but the Houſe, *Church*, the Vineyard of God! Barren *Fig-tree*, fruitleſs Chriſtian, do not thine ears tingle?

And [He] *came and ſought fruit thereon.*

When a man hath got a Profeſſion, and is crouded into the Church and Houſe of God; the queſtion is not

now, hath he life, hath he right Principles, *but hath he fruit*, he *came seeking fruit thereon.* It mattereth not who brought thee in hither? whether God or the Devil, or thine own vain-glorious heart; *But hast thou fruit*, doſt thou bring forth fruit unto God? *And let every one that nameth the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt depart from iniquity.* He doth not ſay, and let every one that hath Grace, or let thoſe that have the Spirit of God; but let *every one* that nameth the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, depart from Iniquity.

1 Tim. 2. 19.

What do men meddle with Religion for? Why do they call themſelves by the name of the Lord Jeſus, if they have not the Grace of

Rom. 8. 9.

of God; if they have not the † Spirit of Christ. *God therefore expecteth Fruit;* What do they do in the Vineyard? Let them work, or get them out, The Vineyard must have Labourers in it: *Son, Go work to day in my Vineyard.* Wherefore, *want of Grace*, and want of Spirit, will not keep God from seeking fruit; *And he came and sought fruit thereon.* He requireth that which he * seemeth to have: Every man in the Vineyard, and House of God, promiseth himself, professeth to others, and would have all men take it for granted, that an Heavenly Principle is in him, Why then should not God seek fruit.

† Mat. 20. 1,2,3,4,5.

Mat. 21. 28

* Luk. 8. 3.

As for them therefore,

that will retain the name of Christians, fearing God; and yet make no conscience of bringing forth fruit to him: He saith to such, away, *As for you, go ye, serve every one his Idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me.* Barren *Fig-tree*, dost thou hear, God expecteth fruit, God calls for fruit, yea God will shortly come *seeking* fruit on this barren *Fig-tree*. Barren Fig-tree either bear fruit, or go out of the Vineyard, (and yet then thy case will be unspeakably damnable.) Yea let me adde, if thou shalt neither bear fruit, nor depart, God *will take his name out of thy* * *mouth*: He will have fruit. And I say further, if thou wilt do neither, yet

Ezek. 20. 39.

* Jer. 44. 26.

God

God in Justice and Righteousness will still come for fruit. And it will be in vain for thee to count this *Austerity*; He will * *reap where he hath not sowed, and gather where he hath not strewed.* Barren *Fig-tree* dost thou hear? Matt. 25. 24,25,26.

Q. *What if a man have no Grace?*

A. Yes, seeing he hath a Profession.

And he came and sought fruit [thereon.]

A Church then, and a Profession, are not places where the workers of Iniquity may hide themselves, and Sins from God. Some of old thought, that because they

could cry, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, that therefore they were delivered, or had a Dispensation to do the abominations which they committed; as some in our days. For, who, say they, have a Right to the creatures if not Christians, if not Professors, if not Church-Members? And from this Conclusion let go the reins of their inordinate Affections after Pride, Ambition, Gluttony, pampering themselves without fear, daubing themselves with the Lust-provoking Fashions of the times; to walk with stretched out Necks, naked Breasts, frizled Fore-tops, wanton Gestures, in gorgeous Apparel, mixt with Gold and Pearl, and costly

Jer. 7. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, &c.

Jude 12.

coſtly array. I will not here make inſpection into their lives, their carriages at home in their corners, and ſecret holes; But certainly, perſons thus ſpirited, thus principled, and thus enclined, have but empty Boughs, Boughs that want the fruit that God expects, and that God will come down to ſeek.

Barren Fig-tree, thou art not licenſed by thy Profeſſion, nor by the Lord of the Vineyard, to bear *theſe* Cluſters of *Gomorrah*: neither ſhall the *vineyard*, nor thy being *crouded* amongthe *trees there*, *ſhelter* thee from the ſight of the eye of God. Many make Religion their *cloak*, and Chriſt their *ſtalking-horſe*, and by that means cover themſelves, and hide

Lu. 16.15. Job 13.27. Pro. 5.21. ch. 21.2. their own wickedneſs from men: *But God ſeeth their hearts*, hath his print upon the heels of their feet, and pondereth all their goings: and at laſt, when their iniquity is found to be hateful, He will either ſmite them with hardneſs of heart, and ſo leave them, or awaken them to bring forth fruit. Fruit he looks for, ſeeks and expects, *barren Fig-tree!*

But what! Come into the Preſence of God to ſin. What! Come into the Preſence of God *to hide thy ſin.* Alas man! The Church is Gods garden, and Chriſt Jeſus is the great Apoſtle and High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion. What! come into the Houſe that is called by my Name! into the place where

Heb. 3.1. Jer. 7.8,9, 10.

mine

mine Honor dwelleth! where mine eyes and heart are continually! What, come there to sin, to hide thy sin, to cloak thy sin! His *plants* are an *Orchard* with *pleasant fruits*. And *every* time he goeth into his Garden, it is to see the fruits of the Valley; and to see if the Vine flourish, and if the Pomegranates bud. Psal. 26.8. 1 Kin. 9. 3. Song 4. 13, 14, 15. and 6. 11.

Yea, saith he, *He came seeking fruit on* this *fig-tree*. The Church is the place of Gods delight; where ever he desires to be, there he is night and day. He is there to seek for fruit, to seek for fruit of all, and every tree in the Garden. Wherefore assure thy self, O fruitless one, that thy wayes must needs be open before the eyes of the Lord.

Lord. *One black sheep*, is soon espied, although in company with many; *that* is taken with the first cast of the eye; its different colour still betrays it. I say therefore, A Church and a Profession are not places where the workers of Iniquity may hide themselves from God, that seeks for fruit, *My vineyard*, saith God, *which is mine, is before me.*

Son. 8.12.

And he came and sought fruit thereon [and found none.]

Barren Fig-tree, hearken, *The continual non-bearing of fruit, is a dreadful Sign, that thou art to come to a dreadful end*, as the winding up of this *Parable* concludeth.

And

And found none. None at all, or *none* to God's liking; for when he saith, *He came seeking fruit thereon*, He means fruit † *meet for God*, pleasant fruit, fruit good and sweet. † Heb. 6.

Alas, It is not any fruit will serve; bad fruit is counted none. * *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down, and cast into the fire.* * Mat. 3. 10.

1. There is a fruit among Professors that withers, and so never comes to be ripe, a fruit that is *smitten* in the *growth*, and comes not to *maturity*, and this is reckoned *no fruit*. This fruit those Professors bear, that have *many* fair *beginnings*, or blossoms: That make *many fair offers* of Repentance and Amend-

Amendment; that begin to Pray, to Resolve, and to break off their Sins by Righteousness; but stop at those beginnings, & bring no *fruit* forth *to perfection*. This mans fruit is withered, wrinkled, smitten fruit, and is in effect, *no fruit at all*.

2. There is an *hasty* fruit, such as is the *Corn upon the house-top*, or that which springs up on the *Dung-hil*, that runs up *suddenly*, violently; with *great stalks*, and big *shew*, and yet at *last* proves *empty* of kernel. *This* fruit is to be found in those Professors, that on a sudden are so awakened, so convinced, and so affected with their condition, that they shake the whole Family, the End-ship, the whole Town.

Psal. 129.

For

For a while they cry haſtily, vehemently, dolefully, mournfully, and yet all is but a Pang, an Agony, a Fit, they bring not forth fruit with patience. Theſe are called thoſe haſty fruits, *That ſhall be as a fading flower.* Iſa. 28. 4.

3. There is a fruit that is *vile, and ill taſted*, how long ſoever it be in growing; the Root is dried, and cannot conveigh a ſufficiency of Sap to the Branches to ripen the Fruit. Theſe are the fruit of ſuch Profeſſors, whoſe heart is eſtranged from Communion with the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe fruit groweth *from themſelves*, from their Parts, Gifts, Strength of wit, natural or moral Principles. Theſe, notwithſtanding they bring Jer. 24. Hoſ. 9. 16. Hoſ. 10. 1.

bring forth fruit, are called *empty vines*; such as bring not forth fruit to God.

Their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit; yea though they bring forth, yet will I slay, even the beloved fruit of their womb.

Isa. 5. 4. 4. There is a Fruit that is wild, *I looked for Grapes, and it brought forth* wild *grapes.* I observe, That as there are *Trees* and *Herbs* that are *wholly* right, and noble; fit *indeed* for the Vineyard. So there are also their *Semblance*, but *wild*; not right, but ignoble. There is the *grape* and the *wild-grape*, the *vine* and the *wild-vine*, the *Rose* and the *Canker-rose*, *Flowers* and *wild-flowers*, the *Apple* and the *wild-apple*, which we call the *Crab*.

Now

Now fruit from these *wild* things, however they may please the *Children* to play with, yet the *prudent* and *grave* count them of little, or no value. There are also in the world a generation of Professors, that notwithstanding their Profession are wild by nature; yea, such as were never cut *out*, or *off*, from the *wild olive*-tree, nor never yet planted into the good *Olive*-tree. Now these can bring nothing forth but *wild Olive berries*, they cannot bring forth fruit *unto God*. Such are all those that have lightly taken up a Profession, and crept into the Vine-yard, without a New-birth, and the blessing of Regeneration.

5. There is also untimely

Rev. 6.13. ly fruit, *Even as a Fig-tree caſteth her untimely-Figs.* Fruit out of Seaſon, and ſo no fruit to Gods liking.

There are *two* ſorts of Profeſſors ſubject to bring forth untimely fruit.

1. 1. They that bring forth [fruit] *too ſoon.*

2. 2. They that bring forth [fruit] *too late.*

Firſt, They that bring forth *too ſoon,* They are ſuch as at *preſent* receive the Word with *Joy,* and *anon* before they have root downwards, they thruſt forth upwards, but having *not root,* when the *Sun* ariſeth they are *ſmitten,* and miſerably die without fruit. Theſe Profeſſors are thoſe light and inconſiderate ones, that think nothing but peace will attend

tend the Gospel; and so anon rejoice at the tidings, without foreseeing the evil: wherefore when the evil comes, being unarmed, and so not able to stand any longer, they die, and are withered, and bring forth no fruit. *He that received the Seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a * while; for when Tribulation or Persecution ariseth, because of the word, by and by they are offended.* There is in *Isai.* 28. mention made of some, *Whose glorious beauty shall be a fading flower,* because it is fruit * *before Summer:* both these are untimely fruit.

* Mat. 13. 20, 21.

* Isa. 28. 4.

Secondly,

Secondly, They also bring forth untimely fruit, that stay *till the Season is over*. God will have *his* fruit in *his* Season; I say, he will receive them of such men as shall render them to him in * their Seasons: the missing of the *season* is dangerous, staying † till the door is shut, is dangerous. Many there be that come not till the flood of Gods anger is raised, and too deep for them to wade through; *Surely in the floods of great waters, they shall † not come nigh unto him.* Esau's, *afterward*, is fearful: *For ye know, how that * afterward, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of Repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

* Mat. 21. 41.

† Mat. 25. 10, 11.

† Psal. 32. 6.

* Heb. 12. 16, 17.

So

So the Children of *Israel*, they brought to God the fruits of Obedience too late; their * *Lo we be here*, came too late; their *we will go up*, came too late. The Lord had † sworn † *before that they should not possess the Land*. All these are such as bring forth *untimely* fruit. It is the hard hap of the Reprobate to do all things too late: to be sensible of his want of Grace, too late: to be sorry for sin, too late: to mourn for sin, too late; to seek Repentance, too late: to ask for mercy, and to desire to go to Glory, too late.

* Num. 14. 40, 41, 42.
† ver. 21, 22, 23.
Mat. 25. 10 & 27. 3. Gen. 4 13, 14. Heb. 12. 17 Luke 13. 25, 26, 27.

1. Thus you see that fruit *smitten* in the growth, that *withereth*, and that comes not to maturity, *is no* † *fruit*.

† c. 8. 14.

2. That

2. That *hasty* fruit, such
* Psal. 129. 6. as the * *Corn upon the house top*, withereth also afore it
† Jer. 2. 4. † groweth up, *and is no fruit.*

3. That the fruit that is
* Isa. 5. 4. *vile* and * *ill* tasted, *is no fruit.*
† Rev. 6. 4. That *wild* fruit, † *wild* grapes, *are no fruit.*

5. That *untimely* fruit, such as comes *too soon*, or that comes *too late*; Such as come not in *their* Season, *are no fruit.*

And he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Mat. 21. 34 Nothing will do but fruit: *He looked for Grapes; when the time of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruit of it.*

Quest.

Queſt. But what Fruit doth God expect?

Anſw. Good fruit. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down.* Now before the fruit can be good the tree muſt be good, for good fruits make not a good tree, *but a good tree bringeth forth good fruit; do men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thiſtles?* A man muſt be good, elſe he can bring forth no good fruit; he muſt have righteouſneſs imputed, that he may ſtand good in God's ſight from the curſe of his Law. He muſt have a Principle of Righteouſneſs in his Soul, elſe how ſhould he bring forth good fruits; and hence it is, that Chriſtians fruits are called, *The fruits of the Spirit, the fruits*

Mat. 7. 19. Luk. 6:43, 44, 45. Mat. 7. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

* Gal. 5. 22, 23.

Phil. 1. 11. *fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.* The fruits of the Spirit, therefore the Spirit must be there: the fruits of righteousness, therefore righteousness must *first* be there; but to particularize in a few things briefly.

First, God expecteth fruit that will answer, and be worthy of the Repentance which thou feignest thy self to have. Every one in a Profession, and that hath crouded into the Vineyard, pretendeth to *Repentance*; now of every such Soul, God expecteth that the *fruits* of Repentance be found to attend them. * *Bring forth fruits therefore meet for Repentance*, or answerable to thy profession of the Doctrine

* Mat. 3. 8.

of Repentance. *Barren Fig-tree*, Seing thou art a Professor, and art got into the Vineyard; thou standest before the Lord of the Vineyard, as one of the trees of the Garden: Wherefore He looketh for *fruit* from *thee*, as from the *rest* of the *trees* in the Vineyard; *Fruits*, I say, and *such* as may declare thee in heart and life, one that hath made sound Profession of Repentance. By thy profession thou hast said, *I am sensible of the evil of Sin*; Now then, live such a life, as declares that thou art sensible of the evil of Sin. By thy Profession thou hast said, *I am sorry for my Sin*; Why then, Live such a life as may declare this *Sorrow*. By thy Profession thou hast said,

Psal. 51.4. & 38.4. & 40.12.

Psal. 38. 18 *I am ashamed of my Sin*; I
Isa. 59. 20. but live such a life, that
men by that may *see thy*
Jer. 31. 19. *shame for sin*. By thy Pro-
fession thou sayest, *I have*
Act. 26. 18 *turned from, left off, and am*
become an enemy to every ap-
1 Thes. *pearance of evil*: Ah! But
5. 22. doth thy Life and Conver-
sation declare thee to be such
an one! *Take heed, barren*
Fig-tree, lest thy life should
give thy Profession the lye. I
say again, Take heed, for
God himself will come for
fruit; *And he sought fruit*
thereon.

You have some Professors,
that are only Saints before
men, *when they are abroad*;
but are Devils and Vipers at
home; Saints by Profession,
but Devils by Practice; Saints
in word, but Sinners in heart,

and

and life. These men may have the Profession, but they want the *fruits that become Repentance.*

Barren Fig-tree! Can it be imagined that those that *paint* themselves, did ever repent of their *Pride*; or that those that *pursue* this world, did ever repent of their *Covetousness*: or that those that walk with *wanton eyes*, did ever repent of their *fleshly lusts.* Where, *barren Fig-tree*, is the fruit of these peoples Repentance? Nay, do they not rather declare to the world, *That they have repented of their Profession?* Their fruits look as if they had. Their *Pride* saith, they have repented of their *Humility*: Their *Covetousness* declareth, that

they are weary of *depending upon God*; and doth not thy *wanton* actions declare, that thou *abhorreſt Chaſtity*? Where is thy *fruit*, *Barren Fig-tree*? Repentance is not only a ſorrow, and a ſhame for, but *a turning from ſin to God*; it is called *Repentance from dead works*. Haſt thou that Godly Sorrow, that worketh *Repentance to Salvation*, *never to be repented of*? How doſt thou ſhew thy carefulneſs, and clearing of thy ſelf; thy indignation againſt Sin; thy fear of offending; thy vehement deſire to walk with God; thy zeal for his Name, and Glory in the world: and what revenge haſt thou in thy heart againſt every thought of Diſobedience?

Heb. 6.

2 Cor. 7. 10, 11.

But

But where is the fruit of this Repentance? Where is thy Watching, thy Fasting, thy Praying against the remainders of Corruption? Where is thy Self-abhorrence; thy blushing before God, for the Sin that is yet behind? Where is thy tenderness of the Name of God and his waies? Where is thy Self-denial and Contentment? How dost thou shew before *men* the truth of thy *turning to God? Hast thou renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness?* Canst thou commend thy self *to every mans conscience in the sight of God?* 2 Cor. 4. 2

And he sought fruit thereon.

Secondly, *God expecteth*

fruits that ſhall anſwer that Faith which thou makeſt Profeſſion of. The Profeſſor that is got into the Vineyard of God, doth feign that he hath *the* Faith, the faith *moſt holy*, the faith of *Gods Elect*. Ah! But where are thy fruits, Barren Fig-tree?

Rom. 1. 8. *The faith of the* Romans *was ſpoken of throughout the whole*
2 Theſ. 1. 3. *world, and the* Theſſalonians *Faith grew exceedingly.*

Thou profeſſeſt to *believe* thou haſt a ſhare in *another* world; Haſt thou let go *this*, barren Fig-tree? Thou profeſſeſt thou believeſt in *Chriſt*; is he thy Joy, and the *Life of thy Soul?* Yea, what conformity unto Him, to his Sorrows and Sufferings? What reſemblance hath his Crying, and Groaning,

ing, and Bleeding, and dying wrought in thee? dost thou bear about in thy body the dying of the Lord Jesus? and is also the Life of Jesus made manifest in thy mortal body? Barren Fig-tree, *Shew me thy Faith by thy works. Shew out of a good Conversation thy Works with meekness of wisdome.* Phil. 3. 8, 9, 10. 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11. Jam. 2. 18. & 3. 13.

What *fruit*, what *fruit*, Barren Figtree, what degree of *heart-Holiness* is *Faith purifies the heart*: what *love* to the Lord Jesus? *for Faith worketh by love.* Act. 15. 9. Gal. 5. 6.

Thirdly, As God expecteth Fruits, *according to the Seasons* of Grace thou are under, according to the *rain that cometh upon thee.* Perhaps thou are planted in a good Soil, by great waters,

that thou might'st bring forth Branches, and bear Fruit; that thou might'st be a goodly Vine or Fig-tree: Shall he not therefore look for fruit, for fruit answerable to the means? A Barren Fig-tree, God expects it, and will find it too, if ever He bless thee. *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that comes oft upon it, & bringeth forth herbs meet for him by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.* Heb. 6. 7, 8.

Barren Soul, How many showers of Grace, how many dews from Heaven, how many times have the Silver Streams of the City of God,

run gliding by thy roots, to cause thee to bring forth fruit! These showers, and streams, and the drops that hang upon thy boughs, will all be accounted for; And will they not testifie against thee, that thou oughtest of right *to be burned!* Hear, and tremble, *O thou barren Professor! Fruits that become thy profession of the Gospel, the God of Heaven expecteth.* The Gospel hath in it the Forgiveness of Sins, the Kingdom of Heaven, and Eternal Life; But what fruit hath thy Profession of a belief of these things put forth in thy heart and life? Hast thou given thy *self* to the Lord, and is all that thou hast, to be ventured for his Name in this world? Dost thou walk like

Rom. 1. 13
Col. 4. 5, 6.
2 Cor. 8. 5.
Acts 4. 32.
1 Cor. 8. 6.
20.

one that is bought with a price, *Even the price of precious blood?*

Fourthly, The Fruit that God expecteth is such, *As is meet for himself*, fruit that
Isa. 61. 3. may glorifie God; God's trees *are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified*; fruit *that tasteth of Heaven, abundance* of *such* fruit: *For*
Joh. 15. 8. *herein*, saith Christ, *is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.* Fruits of all kinds, *new and old*, the fruits of the Spirit is in all *goodness, and righteousness,*
Song 7. 13. *and truth. Fruits* before the World, *fruits* before the
Eph. 5. 9. Saints, *fruits* before God, *fruits* before Angels.

O my Brethren, *What manner of persons ought we to be,*

he, who have ſubſcribed to the Lord, and have called ourſelves by the name of *Iſrael*? *One ſhall ſay, I am the Lords; and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of* Jacob; *and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſirname himſelf by the name of* Iſrael. Barren Fig-tree, haſt thou *ſubſcribed*, haſt thou *called* thy ſelf by the name of *Jacob*? And *ſirnamed* thy ſelf by the name of *Iſrael*? All this thou pretendeſt to, who art got into the Vineyard, who art placed among the trees of the garden of God; God doth therefore look for ſuch fruit as is worthy of his *Name*, as is meet for *him*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *We ſhould walk worthy of God*; that is, ſo as that,

Iſa 44.5.

1 Theſ. 2.1

that we may shew in every place, that the presence of God is *with* us, his fear *in* us, and his Majesty and Authority upon *our actions*. Fruits *meet* for him, *such* a dependance upon him, *such* trust in his word, *such* satisfaction in his presence, *such* a trusting of him with all my concerns, and *such* delight in the enjoyment of him, *that may demonstrate that his fear is in my heart*, that my Soul is wrapt up in his things, and that my Body, and Soul, and Estate, and all, are in truth, through his Grace, at his disposé, *fruit meet for him*. Hearty thanks, and blessing God for Jesus Christ, for his good Word, for his Free-Grace, for the discovery of himself in Christ to the

the Soul, secret longing after another world, fruit *meet* for him. Liberality to the poor Saints, to the poor world; a life, in word and deed exemplary, a patient, and quiet enduring of all things, till I have done and suffered the whole will of God, which he hath appointed for me. *That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* Luk.8.15. This is bringing forth fruit unto God. *Having our fruit unto Holiness, and our end everlasting life,* Rom.7.4. Chap.6.22. & 14.8.

Fifthly, The Lord expects fruit *becoming the Kingdom of God.* The Vineyard, saith he, *is a very* Isa.5.1.

fruitful

fruitful Hill; witness the fruit brought forth in *all ages*: The most barren trees that ever grew in the wood of this world, when planted in this Vine-yard, *by the God of Heaven*, what fruit to Godward have they brought forth? Heb. 11. 4. *Abel* offered the *more* excellent Sacrifice. Enoch *walked with God three hundred years*; v. 5. *Noah*, by his life of Faith, *condemned the world, and became heir of the Righteousness which is by Faith.* v. 7. Abraham *left his Country, and went out after God, not knowing whither he went.* v. 8. *Moses* left a Kingdom, *and run the hazard of the wrath of the King*, for the love he had to God and Christ. What shall I say of them who had tryals, not accepting

accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection? *They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword: They wandered about in ſheep-skins and goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented.* *Peter* left his father, ſhip and nets. *Paul* turned off from the feet of *Gamaliel.* Men brought their Goods and Poſſeſſions (the price of them) and caſt it down at the Apoſtles feet; and others brought their Books together, and burnt them, *curious Books*, though they were worth *fifty thouſand* Pieces of Silver. I could add, how many willingly offered themſelves in all Ages, and their *all*, for the worthy name of the Lord

Heb. 11. 35. 36, 37.

Mat. 4. 18, 19.

Act. 19. 18, 19, 20.

Lord Jesus: to be wrackt, starved, hanged, burned, drowned, pulled in pieces, and a thousand calamities. Barren Figtree, the Vineyard of God hath been a fruitful place, What dost thou there? What dost thou bear? God expects fruit according to, or becoming the Soil of the Vineyard.

Sixthly, The fruit which God expecteth is such as becometh God's Husbandry and Labour. The Vineyard is *God's Husbandry, or Tillage.* Joh. 15. 1. *I am the Vine*, saith Christ, *and my Father is the* 1 Cor. 3. 9. *Husbandman.* And again, *Ye are Gods husbandry, ye* Isa. 5. *are Gods building.* The Vineyard, God fences it, God gathereth out the stones, God God builds the Tower, and

the

the Wine-press in the midst thereof. Here is labour, here is protection, here is removing of hindrances, here is convenient Purgation, and all *that there might be fruit.*

Barren Figtree, What fruit hast thou? hast thou fruit becoming the care of God, the protection of God, the wisdom of God, the patience *and husbandry of God?* It is the fruit of the Vineyard, that is either the shame or the praise of the Husbandman. *I went by the field of the slothful,* saith *Solomon, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. And lo, it was grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof.* Prov. 24. 30, 31, 32.

Barren

Barren Figtree. If men should make a judgment of the care, and pains, and labour of God in his Church by the fruit that thou bringest forth, what might they say, is he not slothful, is not he careless, is he not without discretion? O thy *thorns*, thy *nettles*, thy *barren heart*, and *barren life*, is a continual provocation to the eyes of his Glory, as likewise a dishonour to the glory of his Grace.

Barren Figtree, hast thou heard all these things, I will adde yet one more.

And he came and sought fruit thereon.

The question is not now, what thou thinkest of thy

thy ſelf, nor what all the people of God think of thee; but what thou ſhalt be found in that day, when God ſhall ſearch thy boughs for fruit. When *Sodom* was to be ſearched for righteous men, God would not, in that matter, truſt his faithful ſervant *Abraham*, but ſtill as *Abraham* interceded, God anſwered, *If I find fifty, or forty and five there, I will not deſtroy the city.* Barren Fig-tree, what ſaieſt thou? God will come down to ſee, God will make ſearch for fruit himſelf. Gen. 18. 20, 21, 26, 27.

And he came and ſought fruit thereon, and found [none.] *Then ſaid he to the Dreſſer of the Vineyard, Behold, theſe* three *years I come ſeeking fruit on this Fig-tree,*

and

and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?

These words are the effect of Gods search into the boughs of a *barren fig-tree*. He sought fruit, and found *none*, *none* to his liking, *none* pleasant and good. Therefore; *first*, he complains of the want thereof to the Dresser, calls him to come, and see, and take notice of the tree; then signifieth his pleasure, he will have it removed, taken away, cut down from cumbering the ground.

Observ. The *barren Fig-tree* is the Object of God's displeasure, God cannot bear with a fruitless Professor.

[Then] said he, *&c.*

Then, after this provocation

cation; *then*, after he had ſought and found no fruit; *then*, this word [then] doth ſhew us a kind of an inward diſquietneſs: as he ſaith alſo in another place, upon a like provocation. *Then the anger of the Lord, and his jealouſie, ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in this Book ſhall lye upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under Heaven.* Deut. 29. 18, 19, 20.

Then; It intimateth that he was *now* come to a point, to a reſolution what to do with this Fig-tree. *Then ſaid he to the Dreſſer of his Vineyard*, that is, to Jeſus Chriſt; *Behold*, as much as to ſay, come hither, here is a Fig-tree in my Vineyard, here is a Profeſſor in my Church,

Church, that is barren, that beareth no fruit.

Obſerv. *Obſerve*, However the barren Profeſſor thinks of himſelf on Earth, the Lord cries out in Heaven againſt him.

Iſa. 5:5. *And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my Vineyard. I will take away the hedg thereof, and it ſhall be eaten up; and I will break down the walls thereof, and it ſhall be troden down.*

Behold, theſe three years I come ſeeking fruit, &c.

Obſerv. *Theſe three years.* God cries out that his patience is abuſed, that his forbearance is abuſed: Behold, theſe three years I have waited, forborn; theſe three years I have deferred mine anger; *Therefore will I ſtretch out mine hand againſt thee, and*

deſtroy

destroy thee, I am weary with repenting. Jer. 15.6.

These three years. God layeth up *all* the *time*; I say a remembrance of all the time, that *a barren Fig-tree*, or a fruitless Professor, *mispendeth in this world.* As he saith also of *Israel* of old, *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.* Psal. 95.10 *Observ.*

These three years, &c.

These *three* Seasons; God remembers how many *Seasons* thou hast mis-spent. For these *three years* signifie so many *Seasons*. *And when the time of fruit drew nigh*, that is, about the Season, by that they began to be ripe, or that according to the Season, might so have been. *Barren Fig-tree*, thou hast had time, Seasons, Sermons, Ministers, Mat. 21.34 *Observ.*

Afflicti-

Afflictions, Judgments, Mercies, and what not? and *yet hast not been fruitful*: thou hast had awakenings, reproofs, threatnings, comforts, *and yet hast not been fruitful*: thou hast had Patterns, Examples, Citations, Provocations; *and yet hast not been fruitfull.* Well, God hath laid up thy *three years* with himself. He remembers *every* time, *every* season, *every* Sermon, *every* Minister, Affliction, Judgment, Mercy, awakening Pattern, Example, Citation, Provocation; He remembers *all*, as he said of *Israel* of old: *They have tempted me these* ten *times, and have not hearkened to my voice.* And again, *I remember all their wickedness.*

Num. 14. 22.

Hos. 7. 2.

These

These three *years*, &c.

He ſeeks for the fruit of **every** Seaſon; He will not that any of his Sermons, Miniſters, Afflictions, Judgments, or Mercies *ſhould be loſt*, or ſtand for inſignificant things; he will have *according to the benefit beſtowed*; He hath not done without a cauſe all that he hath done, and therefore he looketh for fruit, Look to it *barren Fig-tree.*

2 Chro. 32. 24, 25. Ezek. 14. 23.

I came [ſeeking] *fruit.*

This word [*ſeeking*] ſignifies *a narrow ſearch:* for when a man ſeeks for fruit on a tree, he goes round it, and round it, now looking into this bough, and then into that, he peeks into the utmoſt boughs, and the lowermoſt boughs, if perhaps

Obſerv.

fruit may be thereon.

Barren Figtree, God will look into *all thy boughs*, he will be with thee in thy bed fruits, thy Midnight fruits, thy Closet fruits, thy Family Fruits, thy Conversation Fruits, to see if there be any among all these, that are fit for, or worthy of the Name of the God of Heaven. *He sees what the Children of* Israel *do in the dark. All things are open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.*

Ezek. 8.12

Heb. 4.12, 13.

Seeking fruit on [this] *Figtree.*

Observ. I told you before, that he keeps in remembrance the Times and Seasons that the barren Professor had wickedly mispent. Now, forasmuch as

as he also *pointeth out the Fig-tree.* This *Fig-tree.* It sheweth that the barren Professor, above all Professors, is a continual *odium* in the eyes of God. This *Figtree,* This man *Coniah,* This People draw nigh me with their Mouth, but have removed their Hearts far from me. God knows *who they are* among all the *thousands* of *Israel,* that are the barren and fruitless Professors, his lot will fall upon the head of *Achan,* though he be hid among *six hundred thousand* men. *And he brought his household, man by man, and* Achan, *the Son of* Carmi, *the Son of* Zabdi, *the Son of* Zerah, *of the Tribe of* Judah, *was taken. This* is the *Achan, this* is the Fig-tree,

Jer. 22. 28.
Isa. 29. 13.
Mat. 15. 8.
Josh. 7. 17, 18.

this is the barren Profeſſor.

There is a man hath an 100. *trees* in his Vineyard, and at the time of the ſeaſon, he walketh into his Vineyard to ſee how the trees flouriſh, and as he goes, and views, and pries, and obſerves how they are hanged with fruit: Behold, he comes to one where he findeth naught but leaves. Now he makes a ſtand, looks upon it again and again, he looks alſo here and there, above and below, and if after all this ſeeking, *he finds nothing but leaves thereon:* Then he begins to caſt in his mind, how he may know this tree next year, what ſtands next it, or how far 'tis off the hedg; but if there be nothing there that

Similie.

that may be as a mark to know it by, then he takes his *book*, and giveth it a private mark, (*And the Lord ſet a mark upon* Cain) ſaying, Go thy waies, fruitleſs Fig-tree, *Thou haſt ſpent this Seaſon in vain.* Gen. 4.

Yet doth he not cut it down, I will try it another year; may be this was not a *hitting* Seaſon. Therefore he comes again *next* year to ſee if now it have fruit, but as he found it *before*, ſo he finds it *now barren, barren*, every year *barren*; he looks again, *but finds no Fruit.* Now he begins to have *ſecond* thoughts: How! Neither hit *laſt* year, nor *this*. Surely the Barrenneſs is not in the Seaſon; ſure the fault is in the Tree. However I will

ſpare it this year alſo, but will give it a *ſecond* mark: And it may be, *he toucheth it with his hot iron*, becauſe he begins to be angry.

1 Tim. 4. 2.

Well, at the *third* ſeaſon He comes again *for fruit*, but the *third* year is like the *firſt* and *ſecond*, *no fruit yet*; *it only cumbreth the ground*: What now muſt be done with this Fig-tree? Why, *The Lord will lop its boughs with terrour*; yea, the thickets of thoſe Profeſſors *with iron*. *I have waited*, ſaith God, *theſe three years*, I have miſſed of fruit *theſe three years*; It hath been a cumber-ground *theſe three years*; *cut it down*. Precept hath been upon Precept, and Line upon Line, one year after another, for *theſe three years*, but no fruit

Iſa. 10. 33, 34.

Iſa. 28. 10.

can be ſeen, I find none, fetch out the Ax. I am ſure this is the Fig-tree, I know it from the firſt year, *Barrenneſs* was its ſign then, *barrenneſs* is its ſign now, make it fit for the fire. *Behold the Ax is laid to the root of the trees, every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire.* Mat. 3 10.

My Brethren, ſeriouſly, *Obſ.* *Gods heart cannot ſtand towards a barren Fig-tree.* You know thus it is with your ſelves: If *you* have a tree in *your* Orchard, or Vineyard, that doth *only cumber the ground*, *you* cannot look upon that tree with pleaſure, with complacency and delight: No, if *you* do but go by it, if *you* do but caſt *your*

eye upon it; yea, if *you* do but think of that tree, *you* threaten it in *your* heart, saying, *I will hew thee down shortly; I will to the fire with thee shortly.* And it is in vain for any to think of perswading of *you* to shew favour to the *barren Fig-tree*, and if they should perswade, your answer is irresistible, *It yields me no profit*, it takes up room, and doth no good, a better may grow in its room.

Cut it down.

Thus when the Godly among the * *Jews* made Prayers, that rebelliious *Israel* might not be cast out of the Vineyard, what saith the answer of God. *Though* Moses

Jer. 14. 17, 18, 19, 20.

Jer. 15. 1.

Moſes *and* Samuel *ſtood before me, yet could not my mind be toward this people: wherefore caſt them out of my preſence, and let them go forth.* What a reſolution is here, *Moſes* and *Samuel* could do almoſt any thing with God in prayer. How many times did *Moſes* by Prayer turn away Gods Judgments from *even* Pharoah *himſelf!* yea, how many times did he by Prayer preſerve *Iſrael*, when in the * Wilderneſs, from the anger and wrath of God? *Samuel* is reckoned excellent this way, yea ſo excellent, that when *Iſrael* had done that fearful thing, as to reject the Lord, and chuſe them another King; he prayed, and the Lord ſpa-

* Pſal. 106. 23. & 99. 6.

1 Sam. 12.

red, and forgave them: But yet neither *Moſes* nor *Samuel can ſave a barren Fig-tree.* No though *Moſes* and *Samuel* ſtood before me, that is pleading, arguing, interceding, ſupplicating, and beſeeching, yet could they not incline mine heart to this People.

Cut it down.

Ay, but Lord it is a *Fig-tree*, a Fig-tree! if it was a *Thorn*, or a *Bramble*, or a *Thiſtle*, the matter would not be much; but it is a *Fig-tree*, or a Vine: well, but mark the anſwer of God; *Son of man, what is the vine tree, more than any tree, or than a branch that is among the trees of the Forreſt, ſhall*

Ezek. 15. 2, 3.

wood

wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin thereof, to hang any veſſel thereon? If trees that are ſet, or planted for fruit, *bring not forth that fruit*, there is betwixt them and the trees of the Forreſt, *no better-ment at all*, unleſs the bet- ver. 4.
terment lieth in the trees of the Wood, for they are fit to build withal; but a *Fig-tree*, or a *Vine*, *if they bring not forth fruit*, yea good fruit, they are fit for nothing at all, but to be cut down, and prepared for the fire; and ſo the Prophet goes on, *Behold, it is caſt into the fire for fuel, if it ſerve not for fruit, it will ſerve for fewel, and ſo the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the middle of it is burnt.*

Ay but, theſe *Fig-trees*

and

and *Vines* are Church-Members, Inhabiters of *Jeruſalem.* So was the *Fig-tree* mentioned in the *Text*; But what anſwer hath God prepared for theſe *Objections*,

Ver. 6, 7. Why? *Thus ſaith the Lord God, as the vine-tree among the trees of the forreſt, which I have given to the fire for fuel, ſo will I give the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem. *And I will ſet my face againſt them, they ſhall go from one fire, and another fire ſhall devour them.*

Cut it down.

The woman that delighteth in her Garden, if ſhe have a *ſlip* there, ſuppoſe (if it was fruitful) ſhe would not take *five* Pounds for it.

Yet

Yet if it bear no fruit, if it wither, and dwindle, and die, and turn cumber-ground only, *it may not ſtand in her garden*. Gardens and Vineyards are places for *fruit*, *for fruit* according to the *nature* of the plant or flowers. Suppoſe ſuch a *ſlip* as I told you of before, ſhould be in your garden, and there die: *Would you let it abide in your Garden?* No! away with it, away with it. The woman comes into her garden towards the Spring, where firſt ſhe gives it a *ſlight* caſt with her eye; then ſhe ſets to gathering out the *weeds*, and *nettles*, and *ſtones*; takes a *beeſom* and *ſweeps* the *walks*: this done, ſhe falls to *prying* into her *herbs* and *ſlips*, to ſee if *they* live, to

ſee

see if they are likely to grow: Now, *if she comes to one that is dead*, that she is confident will not grow, up she pulls that, and makes to the heap of rubbish with it, where she despisingly casts it down, and valueth it *no more* than a *nettle*, or a *weed*, or than the *dust* she hath swept out of her *walks*. Yea, if any that see her should say, Why do you so? The answer is ready, 'Tis dead, 'tis dead at root: If I had let it stand, 'twould but have cumbered the ground. *The strange slips* (and also the dead ones) *they must be an heap in the day of grief, and of desperate Sorrow.*

Isa. 17. 10, 11.

Cut it down.

There be *two* manner of cuttings down;

First,

First, When a man is cast out of the Vineyard.

Secondly, When a man is cast out of the World.

First, When a man is cast out of the Vineyard. And that is done *two* waies.

1. *By an immediate hand of God.*

2. *By the Churches due execution of the Laws and Censures which Christ for that purpose hath left with his Church.*

First, God cuts down the Barren Fig-tree *by an immediate hand*, smiting his roots, blasting his branches, and so takes him away from among his people. *Every branch*, saith Christ, *that beareth not fruit in me, He*, my Father, *taketh away*. He taketh him out of the Church, He taketh 1. Joh. 15. 2.

taketh him away from the Godly. There are *two* things by which God taketh the *barren* Professor from among the Children of God.

First, *Strong Delusions.*

Secondly, *Open Prophaneness.*

First, By strong Delusions, such as beguile the Soul with damnable Doctrines, that *swerve* from Faith and Godliness, *They have chose their own ways, saith God, and their Soul delighteth in their abominations; I also will chuse their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them:* I will smite them with blindness, and hardness of heart, and failing of eyes, and will also suffer the Temper to tempt and effect his hellish designs upon them; *God will send*

Isa. 66. 3, 4

Isa. 6. 9, 10.

1 Kin. 22. 20, 21, 22.

2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12.

ſend them ſtrong deluſions, that they may believe a Lie, that they all may be damned, who believe not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.

Secondly, Sometimes God takes away a *barren* Profeſſor by open Profaneneſs. There is one hath taken up a profeſſion of that *worthy name, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; but this Profeſſion is but a cloak, he ſecretly practiſeth wickedneſs; He is a Glutton, a Drunkard, or Covetous, or Unclean. Well, ſaith God, I will looſe the reins of this Profeſſor, I will give him up *to his vile Affections*, I will looſe the reins of his luſts before him, he ſhall be entangled with his beaſtly luſts, he ſhall be overcome of ungodly company. Thus they

that

that turn aside to their own
Psal. 125. 5 crooked waies, *The Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of Iniquity.* This is God's hand immediately God is now dealing with this man *himself.* *Barren Fig-tree,* hearken, Thou art crouded into a Profession art got among the Godly and there art a scandal to the holy and glorious Gospel but withal so cunning, that like the Sons of *Zeruiah* thou art too hard for the Church. She knows not how to deal with thee; well saith God, I will deal with that man my self: *I will answer that man by my self;* he
Ezek. 14. 7, 8. that sets up his Idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his Face, and y

com

comes and appears before me; *I will set my face against that man, and will make him a Sign and a Proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my People, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

2. But *Secondly*, God doth sometimes cut down the *barren Fig-tree* by the Church, by the Churches due execution of the Laws and Censures, which Christ for that purpose hath left with his Church. This is the meaning of that in *Matth.* 18. 1 *Cor.* 5. And that in *Timothy*, upon which now I shall not enlarge. But which way soever God dealeth with thee, *O thou barren Fig-tree*, whether by himself immediatly, or by his Church,

Mat. 8. 17, 18.

1 Tim. 1. 20.

1 Cor. 5. 4, 5.

Church, it amounts to one and the same. For if timely Repentance prevent not, *The end of that Soul is damnation.* They are blasted, and withered, and gathered by men, Gods enemies, and at last being cast into the fire, *burning must be their end. That which beareth Briars and Thorns, is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.*

Joh. 15.6.

Heb. 6.8.

Lev. 10.1, 2, 3. But again; sometimes by *cut it down*, God means, cast it out of the world: Thus he *cut* down *Nadab* and *Abihu*, when *he burned them up with fire from Heaven*; Thus He *cut down* Corah, Dathan, *and* Abiram, *when he made the earth to swallow them up.* Thus he *cut* down *Saul*, *when he gave him*

Numb. 16. 31, 32, 33.

1 Sam. 31.4

him up to fall upon the edge of his own ſword, and died. Thus He *cut down* Ananias *with* Saphira *his wife, when he ſtruck them down dead in the midſt of the Congregation.* Act. 5. 5. 10.

I might here alſo diſcourſe of *Abſolom*, *Ahithophel* and *Judas*, who were *all three hanged*; The *firſt* by Gods revenging hand, the *other* were given up of God to be their own Executioners. Theſe were barren and unprofitable *Fig-trees*, ſuch as God took no pleaſure in, therefore he commanded, *To cut them down.* The *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *He ſhall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.* 2 Sam. 18. 9. & 17. 23. Mat. 27. 3, 4, 5. Pſal. 58. 9.

Barren Figtree, hearken; God calls for the Ax, his Sword, bring it hither, here-

is a barren Professor, *Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground.*

Ezek. 21. 9, 10.

Why cumbereth it the ground.

By these words the Lord suggesteth *reasons* of his displeasure against the Barren Fig-tree, *It cumbereth the ground.* The Holy Ghost doth not only take an Argument from its *barrenness*, but because it is a *cumber-ground*, *Therefore* cut it down; Wherefore it must needs be a provocation.

1. Because, as much as in him lieth, he disappointeth the design of God in planting his Vineyard. *looked that it should bring forth fruit.*

2. It hath also abused his

Pati-

Patience, his long, *his three years patience.*

3. It hath also abused *his labour*; his pains, his care, and providente of * protection and preservation: for he hedges his Vineyard, and walls it about. *Cumber-ground! all these things thou abusest.* He waters his Vineyard, and looks to it night and day, but all these things thou hast abused.

* Isa. 51. 2,3. & 27.1,2, 3.

Further, There are other reasons of Gods displeasure; as *first*, a *cumber-ground* is a very mock and reproach to Religion, a mock and reproach to the waies of God, to the People of God, to the Word of God, and to the name of Religion. It is expected of all hands, that *all the trees* in the Garden of God,

God, ſhould be fruitful. *God* expects fruit, the *Church* expects fruit, the *world*, even the *world* conclude that Profeſſors *ſhould be fruitful in good works*; I ſay, the very *world* expecteth that Profeſſors ſhould be better than themſelves: But, *barren Fig-tree*, thou diſappointeſt all: Jer. 2: Nay, haſt thou not learned *the wicked ones* thy waies? Haſt thou not learnt them to be more wicked by thy example: (but that's by the by.) *Barren Fig-tree*, Thou haſt diſappointed others, and *muſt be diſappointed thy ſelf. Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.*

Secondly, The Barren Fig-tree *takes up the room where a better tree might ſtand*; I ſay, it takes up the room, it keeps,

keeps, ſo long as it ſtands where it doth, a fruitful tree out of that place, and therefore it muſt *be cut down.* *Barren Figtree*, Doſt thou hear? Becauſe the *Jews* ſtood fruitleſs in the Vineyard, Therefore, ſaid God, *The Kingdom of Heaven ſhall be taken from you, and ſhall be given to a Nation that ſhall render him their fruits in their ſeaſon.* The *Jews* for their barrenneſs were *cut down*, and more fruitf people put in their room. As *Samuel* alſo ſaid to barren *Saul*, *The Lord hath rent the Kingdom from thee, and hath given it to thy neighbour, that is better than thou*; the unprofitable Servant *muſt be caſt out*, muſt be cut down.

Mat. 21. 33-41.

1 Sam. 15. 28.

Mat. 25. 27

Cumber-ground! How many hopeful, inclinable, forward people, haſt thou by thy fruitleſs and unprofitable life, kept out of the Vineyard of God; for thy ſake have theſe people ſtumbled at Religion; By thy life have they been kept from the love of their own Salvation. Thou haſt been alſo a means of hardening others, and of quenching, and killing weak beginnings. Well, *Barren Fig-tree! Look to thy ſelf*, (thou wilt not go to Heaven thy ſelf, and them that would, thou hindereſt). Thou muſt not alwaies cumber the ground, nor alwaies hinder the Salvation of others: Thou ſhalt be *Cut down, and another ſhall be planted in thy room.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The *Cumber-ground* is a *Sucker*, he draws away the heart and nouriſhment *from the other trees*. Were the *cumber-ground cut down*, the other would be more fruitful; he draws away that fatneſs of the ground to himſelf, that would make the other more hearty and fruitful. *One Sinner deſtroyeth much good.* Eccl. 9. 18.

The *Cumber-ground* is a very *Droan* in the *Hive*, that eats up the *Honey* that ſhould feed the labouring Bee; he is a *thief* in the *Candle*, that waſteth the *Tallow*, but giveth no *Light*; he is the *unſavory* Salt, that is fit for nought but the Dung-hil. Look to it *Barren Fig-tree*.

And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down, v. 8, 9.

Isa. 53. 12. THese are the words of the Dresser of the Vineyard, who, I told you, is Jesus Christ (for he made intercession for the transgressers.) And they contain a Petition, presented to an offended Justice, praying that a little more time, and patience might be exercised towards the barren, cumberground *Fig-tree*.

In this Petition there are *Six* things considerable;

First,

First, That Juſtice might be *deferred*. O that Juſtice might be *deferred*. Lord let it *alone*, &c. a while longer.

Secondly, Here is *time* prefixed, as a ſpace to try if more means *will cure a barren Fig-tree. Lord let it alone this year alſo.*

Thirdly, The means to help it, are propounded, *until I ſhall dig about it, and dung it.*

Fourthly, Here is alſo an inſinuation of a Suppoſition, that by thus doing, Gods expectation may be anſwered, *And if it bear Fruit, Well.*

Fifthly, Here is a Suppoſition that the *barren* Fig-tree may *yet* abide *barren*, when Chriſt hath done *what he will unto it, and* if *it bear fruit*, &c.

Sixtly, Here is at last a *Resolution*, that if thou continue barren, *hewing days will come upon thee.* And if it bear fruit, well, *And if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

But to proceed according to my former Method, by way of Exposition.

Lord, let it alone this year also.

Here is astonishing Grace indeed, astonishing Grace! I say, that the Lord Jesus should concern himself with a *barren Fig-tree*; that He should step in to stop the blow from a *barren Fig-tree.* True, He stopt the blow but for a time; But *why did he stop it at all?* Why did not he fetch out the Ax? Why did

did he not do Execution? Why did not he *cut it down? Barren Fig-tree!* 'tis well for thee that there is a Jesus at Gods right hand, a Jesus of that largeness of bowels, *As to have compassion for a barren Fig-tree,* else Justice had never let thee alone to cumber the ground as thou hast done. When *Israel* also had sinned against God, down they had gone, *But that* Moses *stood in the breach. Let me alone,* said God to him, *That I may consume them in a moment, and I will make of thee a great Nation. Barren Fig-tree,* Dost thou hear? Thou knowest not how oft the hand of Divine Justice hath been up to strike, and how many years since thou hadst

Psal. 106. 23.

Exo. 32. 10 Nu. 16. 20.

been *cut down*, had not Jesus caught hold of his Fathers Ax. Let me alone, let me fetch my blow, or *cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* Wilt thou not hear yet, *Barren Fig-tree?* Wilt thou provoke still! *Thou hast wearied men*, and provoked
Isa. 7. 13. the Justice of God; *And wilt thou weary my Christ also!*

Lord, let it alone this year,

Lord, a little longer, lets not lose a Soul for want of means; *I will try*, I will see if I can make it fruitful, *I will not beg a long life*, nor that it might still be *barren*, and so provoke thee. I beg for the sake of the Soul, the immortal Soul, Lord spare it

it *one year only, one year longer, this year alſo*; if I do any good to it, it will be *in little time*. Thou ſhalt not be over-wearied with waiting, *one year and then*.

Barren Fig-tree, Doſt thou hear what ſtriving there is between the *Vine-dreſſer* and the *Husband-man* for thy life. *Cut it down*, ſaies one; *Lord ſpare it*, ſaith the other; *'Tis a cumber-ground*, ſaith the Father, one year longer praies the Son, *Let it alone this year alſo,*

Until I ſhall dig about it, and dung it.

The Lord *Jeſus* by theſe words ſuppoſeth *two* things, as Cauſes of the want of fruit in a *barren Fig-tree*, and

two things he ſuppoſeth as a Remedy.

The things that are a cauſe of want of fruit, are

1. *'Tis earth-bound*, Lord the Fig-tree is *earth bound.*

2. *A want of warmer means, of fatter means.*

Wherefore accordingly he propoundeth;

Firſt, *To looſen the earth, to dig about it.*

Secondly, *And then to ſupply it with dung; to dig about it, and dung it. Lord, let it alone this year alſo, until I ſhall dig about it.* I doubt it is too much ground-bound, Luke 14. *The Love of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of Riches*, lie too cloſe to the roots of the heart of this Profeſſor. The love of Riches, the love of Honours, the love of Pleaſures,

Pleaſures, are the Thorns that choak the Word. *For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, (but enmity to God)* how then (where theſe things bind up the heart) can there be fruit brought forth to God? *Barren Fig-tree*, See how the Lord *Jeſus*, by theſe very words, ſuggeſteth the cauſe of thy fruitleſneſs of Soul. The things of this world *lie too cloſe to thy heart*; the earth with its things have *bound up thy roots. Thou art an earth-bound Soul, thou art wrapt up in thick clay. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him*: how then can he be fruitful in the Vine-yard. 1 Joh. 2. 15, 16.

This

Joh. 12. 6. This kept *Judas* from the fruit of caring for the poor. 2 Tim. 4. 10 This kept *Demas* from the fruit of *Self-denial.* Acts 5. 5-10. And this kept *Ananias* and *Saphirah* his wife, from the goodly fruit of sincerity and truth. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. What shall I say, *These are foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money, is the* root *of* all *evil.* How then can good fruit grow from such a root, the root of all evil, *Which while some covet after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* Mark, I say, it is an *evil* root, Nay more, it is the root of all *evil:* how then can the Professor that hath such a root, or a root wrapt up in such

such earthly things, as the Lusts, and Pleasures, and Vanities of this world, bring forth fruit to God!

Until I shall [dig] *about it*

Lord, I will loose his roots, *I will dig up this earth*, I will lay his roots bare, my hand shall be upon him by Sickness, by Disappointments, by cross Providences; I will dig about him until he stands shaking and tottering, until he be ready to fall; Then, if ever, he will seek to take faster hold. Thus, I say, deals the Lord Jesus oft-times with the barren Professor, *he diggeth about him*; He smiteth *one* blow at his heart, *another* blow at his lusts, a *third* at his plea-

sures,

ſures, a *fourth* at his Comforts, *another* at his Self-conceitedneſs; Thus he diggeth about him: This is the way to *take* bad earth from his roots, and to looſen his *roots* from the earth. *Barren Fig-tree,* See here the *care,* the *love,* the *labour* and *way,* which the Lord Jeſus, the Dreſſer of the Vineyard, is fain to take with thee, if happily thou maiſt be made fruitful.

Until I ſhall dig about it, and [dung] *it.*

As the earth, by binding the *roots* too cloſely, may hinder the trees being fruitful: So the want of better means, may be alſo a cauſe thereof. And this is more

more than intimated by the Dreſſer of the Vineyard, *until I ſhall dig about it, and dung it*, I will ſupply it with a more fruitful Miniſtry, with a warmer Word. I will give them Paſtors *after mine own heart, I will dung them*; you know *dung* is a more warm, more fat, more hearty, and ſuckering matter, than is commonly the place in which trees are planted.

I will dig about it, and dung it, I will bring it under an *heart-awakening* Miniſtry, the means of Grace *ſhall be fat*, and good. I will alſo viſit it with Heart-awakening, heart-warming, heart-encouraging Conſiderations, I will apply warm dung to *his roots*, I will ſtrive with him

Gen.6.3. him by my Spirit, and give him ſome taſts of the heaven-
Heb.6.2,3 ly Gift, and the power of the world to come. I am loath to looſe him for want of digging, *Lord, Let it alone this year alſo, until I ſhall dig about it, and dung it.*

And if it bear fruit, well:

And if the fruit of all my labour, doth make this *Fig-tree* fruitful, I ſhall count my *time*, my *labour*, and *means* well beſtowed upon it; And thou alſo, *O my God*, ſhalt be therewith much delighted: *For thou art gracious, and merciful, and repenteſt thee*
Jona.4.2. *of the evil, which thou threatneſt to bring upon a people.*

Theſe words therefore in-

form

form us, that if a *Barren Fig-tree*, a barren Professor, shall now at last bring forth fruit to God, it shall go *well* with that Professor, it shall go *well* with *that poor Soul*. His *former* barrenness, his *former* tempting of God, his *abuse* of Gods Patience, and long-Suffering; his *mispending* year after year, shall now be *all forgiven him*. Yea, God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ will now pass by, and forget all, and say, *Well done*, at the last. When I say to the wicked, *O wicked man, thou shalt surely die*; if he then do that which is lawful and right, if he walk in the Statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, *he shall not die*. Ezek. 3. 3.

Barren Fig-tree, *Dost thou hear!*

bear! the Ax is laid to thy roots, the Lord Jesus prayes God to spare thee; Hath he been *digging* about thee? Hath he been *dunging* of thee! *O Barren Fig-tree, Now* thou art come to the point; if thou shalt *now* become good, if thou shalt after a gracious manner suck in the Gospel-dung, and if thou shalt bring forth fruit unto God, Well; But if not, *the fire is the last.* Fruit or the Fire. Fruit or the Fire, *Barren Fig-tree. If it bear Fruit, well.*

And if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

And if not, &c. The Lord Jesus by this, if, giveth us to understand, that there is a

genera-

generation of Profeſſors in the world, that are incureable, that *will not*, that *cannot* repent, nor be profited by the means of Grace; A generation, I ſay, that will retain a Profeſſion, *But will not bring forth fruit*; A generation that will *wear out* the patience of God, *Time* and *Tide*, Threatnings and Interceſſions, Judgments and Mercies, *And after all will be unfruitful.* Rom. 2.

O the deſperate Wickedneſs that is in thy heart; Barren Profeſſor, Doſt thou hear, the Lord Jeſus ſtands *yet in doubt about thee!* There is an [if] ſtands *yet in thy way.* I ſay, the Lord Jeſus ſtands *yet* in doubt about thee, whether or no, at laſt thou wilt be good. Whether he may not

not labour in vaine, whether his digging and dunging will come to more then loſt labour. *I gave her ſpace to repent, and ſhe repented not.* Rev. 2. 21. I digged about it, I dunged it, I gained time, and ſupplied it with means; but I laboured herein in vain, and ſpent my ſtrength for nought and in vain. Doſt thou hear, *Barren Figtree!* There is yet a queſtion, *whether 'twill be well with thy Soul at laſt.*

And if not, then after that thou ſhalt cut it down.

There is nothing more exaſperating to the mind of a man, than to find all his kindneſs and favour ſlighted: neither is the Lord Jeſus

ſus ſo provoked with any thing, as when Sinners abuſe his means of Grace, if it be barren and fruitleſs under my Goſpel, if it turn my Grace into wantonneſs; if after digging, and dunging, and waiting, it yet remain unfruitful, I will let *thee cut it down.*

Goſpel means applied, is the *laſt remedy* for a barren Profeſſor; if the Goſpel, if the grace of the Goſpel will not do, there can be nothing expected, but *cut it down. Then after that thou ſhalt cut it down.*

O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *Thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as an Hen gather-* Mat. 23: 37, 38.

eth

eth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not? therefore your houſes are left unto you deſolate. Yet it cannot be, but that this Lord Jeſus, who at firſt did put ſtop to the execution of his Fathers Juſtice, becauſe He deſired to try more means with the *Fig-tree:* I ſay, it cannot be, but that an heart ſo full of Compaſſion, *as his is*, ſhould be touched, to behold this Profeſſor muſt now be cut down; *And when he was come near, He beheld the City, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. After that, thou ſhalt cut it down.*

Luke 19. 41, 42.

When

When Chriſt *giveth thee over*, there is *no* Interceſſor, *no* Mediator, *no* more Sacrifice for Sin: all is gone but *Judgment*, but the *Ax*, but *a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.* Heb. 10. 26, 27, 28

Barren Fig-tree, Take heed that thou comeſt not to theſe *laſt words*, for theſe words are a *give-up*, a caſt-up, a caſt-up of a caſt-away: after *that thou ſhalt cut it down.* They are as much, as if Chriſt had ſaid, Father, I begg'd for *more time* for this barren Profeſſor. I begged until I ſhould *dig about it, and dung it*; But now, Father, the *time is out*, the year is ended, *the Summer is ended*, and no good done;

I have alſo tried with my *means*, with the *Goſpel*, I have digged about it; I have laid alſo the *fat* and *hearty* dung of the Goſpel to it; *but all comes to nothing*. Father, I deliver up this Profeſſor to thee again, I have *done*, I have *done* all, I have *done praying*, and endeavouring, *I will hold the head of thine Ax* no *longer*: Take him into the hands of Juſtice, do Juſtice, do the Law, *I will never beg for him more. After that thou ſhalt cut it down. Wo unto them when I depart from them.* Now is this Profeſſor left *naked* indeed, *naked* to God, *naked* to Satan, *naked* to Sin, *naked* to the Law, *naked* to Death, *naked* to Hell, *naked* to Judgment, and *naked* to the gripes

Hoſ. 9. 12.

Mar. 9. 43-48.

gripes of a *guilty* Conſcience, and to the torment of that *worm* that never dies, and to that *fire* that never ſhall be quenched. *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh; for if they eſcaped not, who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven.* From this brief paſs through this *Parable*, you have theſe *two* general Obſervations; Heb. 12. 25.

Firſt, That even then when the Juſtice of God cries out, *I cannot endure to wait on this barren Profeſſor any longer:* Then Jeſus Chriſt intercedes for a *little more* Time, and a *little more* Patience, and a *little more* ſtriving with this Profeſſor, if *Doct.* 1.

possible he may make him a fruitful Professor. *Lord, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig about it and dung it, and if it bear fruit, Well,* &c.

Doct. 2. *Secondly,* There are some Professors whose Day of Grace will end with, *cut it down,* with Judgment; when Christ, by his means, hath been used for their Salvation.

The *First* of these *Observations* I shall pass, and not meddle at all therewith; But shall briefly speak to the *Second,* to wit,

That there are some Professors, whose day of Grace will end with, cut it down, *with Judgment, when Christ by his means hath been used for their Salvation.*

This the Apostle sheweth in that *third* Chapter of his

Epistle

Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*; when he tells us, that the people of the *Jews*, after a *forty years patience*, and endeavour to do them good by the means appointed for that purpoſe, their end was to be *cut down*, or excluded the Land of Promiſe, for their final incredulity, *So we ſee they could not enter in, becauſe of Unbelief.* Wherefore ſaith he, *I was grieved with that generation, and ſaid, they do alwaies erre in their hearts, and they have not known my waies: So I ſware in my wrath, they ſhall not enter into my reſt.* As who ſhould ſay, I would they ſhould have entered in, and for that purpoſe I brought them out of *Egypt*, led them through the Sea, Heb. 3. 10, 11.

and taught them in the Wilderneſs, but they did not anſwer my work, nor deſigns in that matter; whererfore, they ſhall not, I ſware they ſhall not, *I ſwore in my wrath they ſhould not enter into my Reſt.* Here is *cutting down with judgment.* So again *Chapter* the *fourth,* he ſaith, *As I have ſworn in my wrath,* if *they ſhall enter into my reſt, although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world.* This word if, is the ſame with [they ſhall not] in the Chapter before. And where he ſaith, *Although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world.* He giveth us to underſtand, that what Preparations ſoever are made for the Salvation of Sinners, and of how long continuance ſoever

Heb. 4. 2, 3, 4.

ever they are, yet the God-tempting, God-provoking, & fruitleſs Profeſſor is like to go without a ſhare there in; *although the works were finiſht from the foundation of the world.*

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having ſaved the people out of the Land of Egypt, *afterwards deſtroyed them that believed not. And the Angels that kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day.* Jude 5, 6.

Here is an inſtance to purpoſe, an inſtance of men and Angels. Men ſaved out of the Land of *Egypt*, and in their Journey towards *Canaan*, the type of Heaven (cut down) Angels created,

and placed in the Heavens in great Estate and Principality, yet both these, because unfruitful to God in their places, were *cut down*, the men destroyed by God (for so saith the Text) and the Angels reserved in everlasting chains vnder darkness, *to the Judgment of the great day.*

Now, in my handling of this point, I shall discourse of the *cutting down*, or the Judgment here denounced, as it respecteth the doing of it by Gods hand immediately, and that to, with respect to his *casting them out of the world.* And *not* as it respecteth an *act* of the Church, *&c.* And as to this cutting down or Judgment, it must be concluded that it *cannot be before the day of grace be past with the fig-tree.* But according to the

the obſervation, *There be ſome Profeſſors whoſe day of grace will end, with cut it down, and accarding to the* words of the text. *then* after that, *thou ſhalt cut it down. After that*, that is, after all my attempts and endeavours to make it fruitful, after I have left it, given it over, done with it, and have reſolved to beſtow *no more* daies of Grace, opportuities of Grace, and means of Grace upon it; then *after that* thou ſhalt cut it down.

Beſides, the *giving up* of the *Figtree*, is *before* the execution. *Execution* is not alwaies *preſently* upon the *Sentence* given; for after *that* a convenient time is thought on, and *then* is *cuting down*: and ſo it is here

in

in the Text. The Decree that he ſhall periſh, is gathered from its continuing fruitleſs quite through the *laſt year*, from its continuing fruitleſs *at the end of all endeavours*: But *cutting down* is not yet, for that comes with an after word. *Then after* that *thou ſhalt cut it down.*

So then, that I may orderly proceed with the Obſervation, I muſt lay down theſe two Propoſitions.

Firſt, that the day of grace ends with ſome men before God takes them out of this world. And,

Secondly, the death, or *cutting down* of ſuch men will be dreadful. For this *cut it down*, when it is underſtood in the largeſt ſenſe (*as here indeed it ought*) it ſheweth, not only,

only the wrath of God against a mans life in this world, but his waath against him body & Soul. And is as much as to say; cut him off from all the priviledges, and benefitts that come by grace, both in this-world, and that which is to come.

The first Proposition.

But to proceed, *The day of grace ends with some men, before God taketh them ont of this world.* I shall give you some instances of this, and so go on to the last Proposition.

First, I shall instance, *Cain*; *Cain* was a Professor, * a Sacrificer, a worshipper of God; Yea the first worshiper that we read of *after the fall*; But his grapes were wild ones *, *his works were evil*, he did not doe what he did, from truly

* Gen 4. 3

* 1 Joh. 3. 12.

* Gen. 4. 5. v. 8.

true Gospel-motives. Therefore God disallowed his worke, at this his countenance falls; Wherefore he envies his brother, disputes him, takes his opertunity, and kills him, now in *that* day that he *did this* act, was the heavens closed up against him, and that himself did smartingly and fearfully feel, when God made inquisition for the blood of *Abel*, *And now cursed*, said God, *shalt thou be from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brothers blood from thy hand, and*, &c. *And* Cain *said, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Mine Iniqnity is greater than that it may be forgiven. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth,*

Gen. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13, 14.

and

and from thy face ſhall I be hid. Now thou art curſed, ſaith God. Thou haſt driven me out *this* day, ſaith *Cain*, and from thy face ſhall I be hid; I ſhall never more have Hope in thee, Smile from thee, nor expect mercy at thy hand. Thus therefore, *Cain*'s day of Grace ended, and the Heavens, with Gods own heart, were ſhut up againſt him; *yet after this*, he lived long. Gen. 4. 16, 17. *Cutting down*, was not come yet: after *this* he lived to marry a wife, to beget a curſed brood, to build a City, (and what els I know not) all which could not be quickly done; Wherefore *Cain* might live after the day of Grace was paſt with him, ſeveral *hundred* of years.

Second-

Secondly, I ſhall inſtance, *Iſhmael*: *Iſhmael* was a Profeſſor, was brought up in *Abraham*'s family, and was circumciſed at *thirteen years of age*, but he was the ſon of the *bond-woman*, he brought not forth good fruit, he was *A wild Profeſſor*. For all his Religion, he would ſcoff at thoſe that were better then himſelf. Well, upon a day his brother *Iſaac* was weaned, at which time his father made a feaſt and rejoyced before the Lord, for that he had given him the promiſed Son, *at this* Iſhmael *mocked* them, their Son, and Godly rejoyceing. Then came the Spirit of God upon *Sarah* and ſhe cried, *Caſt him out, caſt out this bond-woman, and her Son; for the Son of* * *this bond-woman*

Gen. 17. 25, 26. & 16. 12.

* Gen. 21. 9, 10, 11.

ſhall

ſhall not be Heir with my Son, with Iſack. Now *Paul* to the *Galatians* makes this caſting out to be, not only a caſting out of *Abraham*'s family, but a caſting out alſo *from a lot* * *with the Saints in Heaven.* Alſo *Moſes* giveth us a notable proof thereof, in ſaying, that when he died, *he was gathered to his* † *People*; his people by his Mothers ſide, for he was reckoned from her, the Son of *Hagar*, the Son of the Bondwoman. Now ſhe came of the * *Egyptians*; So that he was gathered when he died, notwithſtanding his Profeſſion, to the place that *Pharoah* and his hoaſt were gathered to, who were drowned in the *Red Sea*, theſe were his People, and he

* Gal. 4. 29,30,31.

† Gen. 25. 17.

* Gen. 21. 9

he was of them, both by Nature and Diſpoſition, by perſecuting as they did. But now, *When did the day of Grace end with this man.* Obſerve, and I will ſhew you: *Iſhmael* was *thirteen years old*, when he was Circumciſed, and then was *Abraham* * *ninety years* old and *nine.* The *next year Iſaac* was † born. So that *Iſhmael* was *now Fourteen* years of Age. Now *when* Iſaac *was weaned* (ſuppoſe he ſuckt four years) by that account *The day of Grace muſt be ended with* Iſhmael, *by that he was* Eighteen *years old.* For that day he mocked, that day it was ſaid, *Caſt him out*, and of that caſting out, the Apoſtle makes what I have ſaid. Beware ye young,

* Gen. 17. 24,25,26.

Gen. 25. 12,13,14, 15,16,17.

young, barren Professors. Now *Ishmael* lived an *hundred* and *nineteen* years after this, in great tranquillity and houour with men; after this he also begat *twelve* Princes, even after his day of Grace was past.

Thirdly, I shall instance *Esau*. *Esau* also was a Professor, he was born unto *Isaac*, and circumcised according to the Custom: but *Esau* was a *gamesom Professor*, an hunts-man, *a man of the field*; also he was wedded to his Lusts, which he did also venture to keep, *rather than the Birth-right*. Well, upon a day, when he came from hunting, and was faint, he sold his Birth-right to *Jacob* his brother. Now the Birth-right, in those days, Gen. 25. 27, 28, 29, 30-34.

days, had the Promiſe and Bleſſing annexed to it. Yea, they were ſo entailed *in this*, that the one could not go without the other, wherefore the Apoſtles Caution is here of weight; *Take heed*, ſaith he, *leſt there be among you a Fornicator, or profane perſon as* Eſau, *who for one Morſel of meat ſold his Birthright; for ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the Bleſſing, he was rejected; for he found no place of Repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.* Now the ending of *Eſau*'s day of Grace is to be reckoned from his ſelling of his Birth-right: For there the Apoſtle points it, leſt there be among you any, that like *Eſau*, ſells his Birth-right:

Heb. 12. 16, 17.

right: for then goes hence the Bleſſing alſo.

But *Eſau* ſold his Birth-right long before his death. *Twenty* years after this, *Jacob* was with *Laban*, and when he returned home, his brother *Eſau* met him. Further, after this when *Jacob* dwelt again ſome time with his Father, then *Jacob* and *Eſau* buried him. I ſuppoſe he might live above *forty*, yea for ought I know, above *fourſcore* years after he had ſold his Birth-right. And ſo conſequently had put himſelf out of the Grace of God. Gen. 31. 41 & 32. 6. & 35. 28, 29.

Three things I would further note upon theſe *three* Profeſſors.

Firſt, *Cain* an angry Profeſſor, *Iſhmael* a mocking one, *Eſau* a luſtful, gameſome

ſome one: *Three Symptomes* of a barren Profeſſor. For he that can be angry, and that can mock, and that can indulge his Luſts, cannot bring forth fruit to God.

Secondly, The Day of Grace ended with theſe Profeſſors at that time when they committed ſome grievous Sin; *Cain's*, when he killed his Brother; *Iſhmael's* when he mocked at *Iſaac*, &c. and *Eſau* when out of love to his Luſts, he deſpiſed, and ſold his Birth-right. Beware barren Profeſſur. *Thou maiſt do that in half a quarter of an hour, from the evil of which thou maiſt not be delivered for ever and ever.*

Thirdly, Yet theſe *three, after their day of Grace was over*, lived better lives, as

to

to outward things, than ever they did before. Cain, *after this*, was Lord of a City, *Ishmael* was *after this*, father of *twelve* Princes, and *Esau after this*, told his Brother, *I have enough, my brother, keep that thou hast to thy self.* Ease, and Peace, and a prosperous life in outwards, is no sign of the favour of God to a barren and fruitless Professor; But rather of his *wrath*, that thereby he may be capable to treasure up *more* wrath, against the *day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

Gen. 4. 17. & 19, 20. c. 23. 16. & 33. 8, 9.

Let thus much serve for the proof of the *first* Proposition, namely, *That the day of Grace ends with some men, before God takes them out of this world.*

Now then, to shew you,

by ſome Signs, how you may know that the day of Grace is ended, or near to ending with the Barren Profeſſor; *And after that thou ſhalt cut it down.*

Firſt, He that hath ſtood it out againſt God, and that hath withſtood all thoſe means for fruit, that God hath uſed for the making of him (if it might have been) a fruitful tree in his garden, he is in this danger; and this indeed is the *ſum* of the *Parable*; The Fig-tree here mentioned, was bleſſed with the application of means, had time allowed it to receive the nouriſhment; But it out-ſtood, with-ſtood, over-ſtood all, all that the Huſband-man did, all that the Vine-dreſſer did.

Signs

Signs of being past Grace.

But a little distinctly to particularize in *four* or *five* Particulars:

First, The day of Grace is like to be past, when a Professor hath withstood, abused, *and worn out Gods patience*, then he is in danger, this is a provocation, then God cries, *cut it down*. There are some men that *steal* into a Profession, *no body knows how*; even as this Fig-tree was brought into the Vineyard, by other hands than Gods: and there they abide liveless, graceless, careless, *and without any good Conscience to God at all*. Perhaps they came in for the loaves, for a trade, for credit, for a blind; or it may be to stifle, & choak the checks, & grinding

1. Sign.

Joh. 6. 26.

Gen. 21. 20, 22, 23.

grinding pangs of an awakened, and diſquieted, Conſcience. Now having obtain'd their purpoſe, *like the Sinners of Sion*, they are at ease, and ſecure; Saying like *Agag*, *Surely the bitterneſs of Death is paſt*; I am well, ſhall be ſaved, and go to Heaven: Thus in theſe vain conceits *it ſpends a year, two,* or *three*; not remembring that at every Seaſon of Grace, and at every opportunity of the Goſpel, *tho Lord comes ſeeking fruit*. *Well*, Sinner, *well barren Fig-tree*, this is but a courſe *beginning*; God comes for fruit. What have I here, ſaith God, what a *Fig-tree* is this, that hath ſtood this year in my Vineyard, and brought me forth no fruit. I will cry unto him,

1 Sam. 15. 30.

Amos 6.1.

1 Sam. 15. 32.

him, Professor! *Barren Fig-tree*, be fruitful! I look for fruit, I expect fruit, I must have fruit, therefore bethink thy self. At these the Professor pauses; but these are words, *not blows*, therefore off goes this consideration from the heart: When God comes the next yeat, he finds him still as he was, a *barren*, fruitless *cumber-ground*. And now again he complains, here are *two years gone*, and *no* fruit appears; Well, I will defer mine anger for my name sake. I will defer mine anger for my praise, *I will refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off* (as yet.) I will wait, I will yet wait to be gracious. But this helps not, this hath not the least

Isa. 48. 9.

Isa. 48. 9.

influ-

influence upon the barren Fig-tree, *Tush*, saith he, here is *no* Threatning: *God is merciful*, he will defer his anger, He waits to be gracious: *I am not yet afraid.* O how ungodly Men, that are at unawares crept into the Vineyard, *how do they turn the Grace of our God into lasciviousness.* Well, he comes the third year for fruit, as he did before, but still he finds *but a barren Fig-tree*; *No* fruit: now he cries out again, *O thou dresser of my Vineyard*, come hither, here's a *Fig-tree* hath stood these *three years* in my Vineyard, and hath at every season disappointed my expectation, for I have looked for fruit in vain. *Cut it down*, my patience

Isa. 30. 18.

Iude 4.

ence is worn out, *I ſhall wait on this Fig-tree no longer.*

2. And now He begins to ſhake the *Fig-tree* with his threatnings; fetch out the Ax, now the *Ax* is death, Death therefore is called for, Death come, ſmite me *this* Fig-tree, and withal the Lord ſhakes this Sinner, and *whirls* him upon a Sick-bed, ſaying, *Take him Death*, he hath abuſed my Patience and Forbearance, not remembring that it ſhould have led him to Repentance, and to the fruits thereof. *Death, fetch away this Fig-tree to the fire*, fetch this barren Profeſſor to Hell. At this, Death comes with *grim* looks into the Chamber, yea and * Hell follows with him to the Bed-ſide, Rom. 2. 3, 4. Rev. 6. 8.

and both ſtare this Profeſſor in the face, yea, begin to lay hands upon him; one ſmiting him with pains in his Body, with Head-ach, Heart-ach, Back-ach, Shortneſs of Breath, Fainting Qualms, Trembling of Joints, Stopping at the Cheſt, and almoſt all the *Symptomes* of a man paſt all recovery. Now while *Death* is thus tormenting the Body, *Hell* is doing with the Mind and Conſcience, ſtriking them with its Pains, caſting ſparks of Fire in thither, wounding with ſorrows and fears of everlaſting damnation, the ſpirit of this poor creature: And now he begins to bethink himſelf, and to cry to God for mercy; *Lord, ſpare me, Lord, ſpare me.* Nay, ſaith

ſaith God, you have been a a Provocation to me, *theſe three years.* How many times have you diſappointed me? How many ſeaſons have you ſpent in vain? How many Sermons and other Mercies did I of my patience afford you? but *all* to no purpoſe at all. *Take him Death.* O good Lord, ſaith the Sinner, Spare me but *this once.* Raiſe me but *this once.* Indeed I have been a barren Profeſſor, and have ſtood to no purpoſe at all in thy Vine-yard: But ſpare! O ſpare, *this one time,* I beſeech thee, and I will be better. *Away, away,* you will not. I have tried you *theſe three years* already, you are nought; If I ſhould recover you again, you

would be as bad as you was before (and all this talk is while Death ſtands by.) The Sinner cries again, Good Lord, try me *this once*, let me get up again *this once*, and *ſee* if I do not mend. But will you promiſe me to mend? yes indeed, Lord, and vow it too; I will never be ſo bad again, *I will be better.* Well, ſaith God, *Death*, let this Profeſſor alone *for this time.* I will try him a while longer, he hath promiſed, he hath *vowed* that he will amend his waies. It may be he will mind to keep his Promiſes. *Vows* are ſolemn things, it may be he may *fear to break his vows:* ariſe from off thy bed, and *now God laies down his Ax.* At this the poor Creature is very thankful, praiſes God, and

fawns

fawns upon him, ſhews as if he did it heartily, and calls to others to thank him too. He therefore riſeth as one would think, to be a new-creature indeed. But by that he hath put on his cloaths, is come down from his bed, and ventured into the Yard, or Shop, and there ſees how all things are gone to *Sixes* and *Sevens*, he begins to have *Second* thoughts: and ſaies to his folks, What have you all been doing? How are all things out of order? I am I cannot tell what behind-hand; one may ſee if a man be but a little a-ſide, that you have neither wiſdome, nor prudence to order things: And now, inſtead of ſeeking to ſpend the reſt of his time

to

to God, *he doubleth his diligence after this world.* Alas, all muſt not be loſt, *we muſt have a provident Care:* and thus quite forgetting the ſorrows of Death, the pains of Hell, the Promiſes and Vows which he made to God to be better: *Becauſe Judgment was not* (now) *ſpeedily executed, therefore the heart of this poor creature is fully ſet in him to do evil.*

Theſe things proving ineffectual, *God takes hold of his Ax again,* ſends Death to a Wife, to a Child, to his Cattle, *(your young men have I* * *ſlain, and taken away your horſes)* I will blaſt him, croſs him, diſappoint him, and caſt him down, and will ſet my ſelf againſt him, *in all that he putteth his hand*

* Amos 4. 9, 10.

hand unto. At this the poor *Barren Professor* cries out again, Lord, I, have sinned, spare me once more, I beseech thee. O take not away *the desire of mine eyes*, spare my Children, bless me in my labours, and I will mend, and be better. No, saith God, you lyed to me last time, I will trust you, *in this*, no longer, and with all he tumbleth the Wife, the Child, the Estate, into a grave:

And then returnes to his place, till this Professor more unfeignedly acknowledgeth his offence. * Hos. 5. 14, 15.

At this the poor creature is afflicted and distressed, rents his cloaths, and begins to call the breaking of his Promise and Vows to mind, he mourns and praies, 1 Kin. 21. 27.

and like *Ahab*, *a while walks softly*, at the remembrance of the justness of the hand of God upon him. And now he renews his Promises, Lord try me *this one time more*, take off thy hand and see. *They go far as never turn.* Well, God spareth him again, sets down his *Ax* again (*Many times He did deliver them, but they provoked him with their Counsels, and were brought low for their Iniquities*). Now they seem to be thankful again, and are as if they were resolved to be Godly indeed. Now they Read, they Pray, they go to Meetings, and seem to be serious a pretty while, but at last they forget. Their Lusts prick them, suita-

Psal. 106. 43.

ſuitable Temptations preſent themſelves: wherefore they turn to their own crooked waies again. *When he ſlew them,* then *they ſought him, and returned early after God, nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their mouth, and lyed unto him with their tongue.* Pſal. 78. 34-36.

4. Yet again, The Lord will not leave this Profeſſor, but will take up his *ax* again, and will put him under a more heart-ſearching Miniſtry, a Miniſtry that ſhall ſearch him, and turn him over and over, a Miniſtry that ſhall meet with him, as *Elijah* met with *Ahab*, in all his acts of wickedneſs (and now *the ax is laid to the roots of the trees*) Beſides, this Miniſtry doth not only Mat. 3. 10.

ſearch the heart, but preſenteth the Sinner with the *Golden* raies of the glorious Goſpel; *Now is Chriſt Jeſus ſet forth evidently*, now is Grace diſplaied ſweetly; Now, now are the Promiſes broken like *Boxes* of *Ointment*, to the perfuming of the whole room. *But alas, there is yet no fruit on this fig-tree.* While his heart is ſearching, he wrangles; while the glorious Grace of the Goſpel is unvailing, this Profeſſor wags and is wanton, gathers up ſome *ſcraps* thereof, *Taſtes the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.* Drinketh in this rain that comes oft upon him, *But bringeth not forth fruit meet for him, whoſe Goſpel it is; takes no heed to walk*

Jude 4. Heb. 6. 3-7, 8.

walk in the Law of the Lord God of Israel, with all his heart; but counteth that the glory of the Gospel consisteth in talk and shew, and that our obedience thereto, is a matter of *Speculation*; that good *works* lie in good *words*, and if they can finely talk, they think they *bravely* please God. They think the Kingdom of God consisteth only in word, not in power: and thus proveth ineffectual this *Fourth* means also. 2 Kin. 10. 31. 1 Cor. 4. 19.

5. Well, Now the *Ax* begins to be heaved higher, for now indeed God is ready to smite the Sinner, yet before he will strike the stroak, he will try one way more at the last, and if that misseth, *down goes the Fig-tree*. Now this

this last way is *to tug, and strive with this Professor by his Spirit.* Wherefore the Spirit of the Lord is now come to him: But *not alwaies to strive with man,* yet a while he will strive with him, he will *awaken,* he will *convince,* he will call to remembrance former Sins, former Judgments, the breach of former Vows and Promises, the mispending of former Days; he will also present perswasive Arguments, encouraging Promises, dreadful Judgements, the shortness of time to repent in; and that there is hope if he come. Further, he will shew him the certainty of Death, and of the Judgment to come; yea, He will pull and strive with this Sinner.

Gen. 6. 8.

Zac 7. 11, 12, 13.

Sinner. But, behold, the mischief now lies here, there is tugging and striving on both sides. The *Spirit* convinces, the *man* turns a deaf ear to God; the *Spirit* saith, Receive my instruction and live; but the *man* pulls away his Shoulder; the *Spirit* shews him whither he is going, but the *man* closeth his eyes against it; the *Spirit* offereth violence, the *man* strives and resists, *They have done despite unto the Spirit of Grace.* The Spirit *parleth* a *Second* time, and urgeth Reasons of a new nature; But the Sinner answereth, No, *I have loved Strangers, and after them I will go.* At this Gods fury comes up into his face, now he comes out of his holy place, and is terrible

Acts 7.50.

Heb. 10.29.

Amos 4. 6,8,9,10, 11.

rible: now He *ſweareth in his wrath, they ſhall never enter into his reſt.* I exerciſed towards you my Patience, yet you have not turned unto me, ſaith the Lord. I ſmote you in your Perſon, in your Relations, in your Eſtate, yet you have not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord, *In thy filthineſs is lewdneſs, becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged; thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I cauſe my fury to reſt upon thee. Cut it down, why doth it cumber the ground.*

Ezek. 24. 13.

A Second Sign.

The 2. Sign. of Another *Sign* that ſuch a Profeſſor is almoſt (if not quite)

quite) past Grace, is, *When God hath given him over, or lets him alone*, and suffers him to do any thing, and that without controul, helpeth him not either in works of Holiness, or in streights & difficulties. *Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone; Woe be to them when I depart from them. I will laugh at their Calamities, and will mock when their fear cometh.* Hos. 4. 17. Pro 1. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

Barren Fig-tree, thou hast heretofore been digged about, and dunged, God's mattock hath heretofore been at thy roots, Gospel dung hath heretofore been applyed to thee; thou hast heretofore been strove with, convinced, awakened, made to taste and see, and crie, *O the blessedness!* Thou hast heretofore been met with

with under the Word, thy heart hath melted, thy Spirit hath fallen, thy Soul hath trembled, and thou haſt felt ſomething of the Power of the Goſpel. But thou haſt ſinned, thou haſt provoked the eyes of his Glory, thy iniquity is found to be hateful, and now perhaps God hath left thee, given thee up, *and lets thee alone.*

Heretofore thou waſt tender, thy Conſcience ſtartled at the temptation to wickedneſs, for thou wert taken off from *the pollutions of the world, through the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; but that very *vomit* that once thou wert turned from, now thou lappeſt up, with the *dog* in the *Proverb* again, and that ve-

2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22.

ry

ry *Mire*, that once thou ſeemeſt to lie waſhed from, *in that very mire thou now art tumbling afreſh.* But to particularize, there are *three* Signs of a mans being given over of God.

1. When he is let alone in Sinning, *when the reins of his luſts are looſed*, and he given up to them. *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledg, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteouſneſs.* Seeſt thou a man that heretofore had the knowledg of God, and that had ſome awe of his Majeſty upon him; I ſay, ſeeſt thou ſuch an one *Sporting himſelf in his own deceivings*, turning the Grace of

He is let alone in ſinning.

Rom. i. 28, 29, 30, 31.

of our God into Laſciviouſneſs, and walking after his own ungodly Luſts; his Judgment now of a long time lingereth not, *and his Damnation ſlumbereth not.* Doſt thou hear, barren Profeſſor, It is aſtoniſhing to ſee, how thoſe that once ſeemed *Sons of the Morning*, and were making Preparations for Eternal Life, now at laſt, for the rottenneſs of their hearts, by the juſt Judgment of God, to be permitted, being paſt feeling, to give themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, *to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.* A great number of ſuch were in the *firſt* Goſpel-days; againſt whom *Peter*, and *Jude*, and *John* pronounceth the heavy Judgment of God.

2 Pet. 2. 13.

Jud. 4-18.

Eph. 4. 18, 19.

Peter

Peter and *Jude couple them with the fallen Angels*; and *John* forbids that prayer be made for them, becauſe that is happened unto them, that hath happened to the Angels that fell. *Who for forſaking their firſt ſtate, and for leaving their own habitation, are reſerved in chains under everlaſting darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great Day.* *Barren Fig-tree*, Doſt thou hear?

2 Pet. 2. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Jude 5, 6, 7, 8. 1 Joh. 5. 16.

Firſt, Theſe are beyond all Mercy.

Secondly, Theſe are beyond all Promiſes.

Thirdly, Theſe are beyond all hopes of Repentance.

Fourthly, Theſe have no Interceſſor, nor any more ſhare in a Sacrifice for Sin.

Fifthly, For theſe remains nothing,

nothing, but a fearful looking for of Judgment.

Sixthly, Wherefore these are the true Fugatives and Vagabonds, that being left of God, of Christ, of Grace, of the Promise, and being beyond all hope, wander and straggle to and fro, even as the Devil, their associate, until their time shall come to die, or until they descend in Battle, and perish.

He is left in hearing alone in hearing.

2. Wherefore they are let at any time come under the word, there is for them *no* God, *no* savour of the means of Grace, *no* stirrings of heart, *no* pity for themselves, *no* love to their own Salvation. Let them look on this hand or that, there they see such effects

effects of the Word in others, as produceth signs of Repentance, and love to God and his Christ, *These men only have their backs bowed down alway.* These men only, *have the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear to this very day.* Wherefore as they go to the place of the holy; *So they come from the place of the holy, and soon are forgotten in the places where they so did.* Only they reap this damage, *They treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Look to it, O *barren Professor.*

Rom. 11. 8, 9, 10. Eccl. 8. 10. Rom. 2. 3, 4, 5.

3. If he be visited after the common way of Mankind, either with Sickness, Distress,

He is left in his Affliction,

Distress, or any kind of Calamity, still no God appeareth, no sanctifying hand of God, no special Mercy is mixed with the Affliction. But he falls sick, and grows well, *like the beast*; or is under distress, as *Saul*, who when he was engaged by the *Philistines*, was forsaken and left of God. *And the* Philistins *gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in* Shunem; *and* Saul *gathered all* Israel *together, and they pitched in* Gilboa: *And when* Saul *saw the Host of the* Philistins, *he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when* Saul *enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him no more, neither by Dreams, nor by* Urim, *nor by Prophets.* The Lord answered

1 Sam. 28. 4, 5, 6.

swered him *no* more, He had done with him, cast him off, and rejected him, and left him to stand and fall with his sins by himself. But of this more in the *Conclusion*, therefore I here forbear.

4. These men may go whither they will, do what they will, they may range from Opinion to Opinion, from Notion to Notion, from *Sect to Sect*, but are stedfast no where, they are left to their own uncertainties: they have not Grace to establish their hearts, and though some of them have boasted themselves of this Liberty; yet *Jude* calls them *wandering Stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* Thev are left, as I told you before, to be Fugatives.

He is left to do what he will, or go where he will.

Jude 13.

gatives and Vagabonds in the Earth, to wander every where, but to abide no where, until they ſhall deſcend *to their own place*, with Cain and *Judas*, men of the ſame fate with themſelves.

Acts 1.5.

A Third *Sign.*

Thirdly, Another *Sign*, that ſuch a Profeſſor is quite paſt Grace, is, when his heart is grown ſo hard, ſo ſtony and impenetrable, that nothing will pierce it. *Barren Fig-tree, Doſt thou conſider?* A hard and impenitent heart is the Curſe of God. A heart that cannot repent, is inſtead of all plagues at once; And hence it is that God ſaid of *Pharaoh*, when he ſpake of delivering him up in the greatneſs of his Anger, *I will at this time*, ſaith he, *ſend all my*

Rom. 2.5.

Exo. 9. 14.

my Plagues upon thy heart.

To ſome men that have grievouſly ſinned under a Profeſſion of the Goſpel; God giveth this *Token* of his Diſpleaſure, they are denied the Power of Repentance, their heart is bound, they cannot repent: It is impoſſible that they ſhould ever repent ſhould they live a *thouſand* years, *It is impoſſible for thoſe* Fall-a-waies *to be renewed again unto Repentance, ſeeing they crucifie to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to open ſhame.* Now to have the heart ſo hardened, *ſo judicially hardened*, this is as a bar put in by the Lord God, againſt the Salvation of *this* Sinner. This was the burden of *Spira's* complaint, *I cannot do it: O now I cannot do it.* Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.

Zec. 7. 12, 13, 14.

This man ſees what he hath done, what ſhould help him, and what will become of him, yet he cannot repent; he pulled away his ſhoulder before, he ſtopped his ears before, he ſhut up his eyes before, *and in that very poſture God left him*, and ſo he ſtands to this very day. I I have had a fancy, that *Lot's* wife, when ſhe was turned into a Pillar of Salt, ſtood yet looking over her ſhoulder, or elſe with her face towards *Sodom*; as the judgment caught her, ſo it bound her, and left her a Monument of Gods anger to after-Generations.

Gen. 19. 26.

We read of ſome that are *ſeared with an hot iron*, and that are *paſt feeling*, for ſo ſeared perſons, in ſeared parts are.

are. Their Conſcience is 1 Ti. 4. 3.
ſeared. The Conſcience is the thing that muſt be touched with feeling fear and *remorſe*, if ever any good be done with the Sinner. How then can any good be done to thoſe whoſe Conſcience is *worſe than that, that is faſt aſleep in ſin.* For that Conſcience that is faſt aſleep, may Eph. 4. 19.
yet be effectually awakened and ſaved; but that Conſcience *that is ſeared*, dried, as it were into a *Cinder*, can never have ſenſe, feeling, or the leaſt regret in this world. *Barren Fig-tree, hearken, judicial hardening is dreadful.* There is a difference betwixt that hardneſs of heart, that is incident to all men, and that which comes upon ſome as a ſignal or ſpecial

Judgment of God: and although all kind of hardneſs of Heart, in ſome ſenſe, may be called a Judgment, yet to be hardened with this *Second* kind, is a Judgment peculiar only to them that periſh; An hardneſs that is ſent as a puniſhment, *for the abuſe of light received, for a reward of Apoſtacy.*

This *Judicial* hardneſs is diſcovered from that which is incident to all men in theſe particulars.

1 Sam. 6. 6. Rom. 2. 20, 21.

1. It is an hardneſs that comes after ſome great Light received, *Becauſe of ſome great Sin committed againſt that Light, and the Grace that gave it.* Such hardneſs as *Pharaoh* had, after the Lord had wrought wonderouſly before him: Such

hardneſs

hardneſs as the *Gentiles* had, a *hardneſs* which darkened the heart, a *hardneſs* which made their minds *reprobate*: *This hardneſs* is alſo the ſame with that the *Hebrews* are cautioned to beware of; an *hardneſs* that is cauſed by Unbelief, and a departing from the Living God; an *hardneſs* compleated through the deceitfulneſs of Sin: Such as that in the Provocation, of whom God ſware, that they ſhould not enter into his *Reſt*. 'Twas this kind of *hardneſs* alſo that both *Cain*, and *Iſhmael*, and *Eſau* were hardened with, after they had committed *their great Tranſgreſſions*. Heb. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 12, 13.

2. It is the *greateſt* kind of *Hardneſs*, and hence they are ſaid to be *Harder than a* Jer. 5. 3.

Zac.7.13. *Rock*, or than an *Adamant*, that is, *harder than Flint*. So hard that nothing can enter.

Rom.2.5. 3. It is an *Hardneſs* given in much anger, and that to

Heb.6.6. bind the Soul up in an impoſſibility of Repentance.

4. It is an *Hardneſs* therefore which is incurable, of which a man muſt die and be damned. *Barren Profeſſor, hearken to this.*

A Fourth *Sign.*

Fourthly, Another *Sign*

Job 9.4. that ſuch a Profeſſor is quite paſt Grace, is when he fortifies his hard heart againſt

& 5.12,13 the *tenour* of God's Word. This is called *hardening themſelves againſt God, and turning of the Spirit againſt him.*

him. As thus, When after a Profeſſion of Faith in the Lord Jeſus, and of the Doctrine that is according to Godlineſs, they ſhall embolden themſelves in courſes of Sin, *by promiſing themſelves that they ſhall have Life and Salvation notwithſtanding.* *Barren Profeſſor,* hearken to this. This man is called, *A root that beareth Gall and Wormwood, or a poiſonful herb,* ſuch an one as is abominated of God; yea the abhorred of his Soul. For this man ſaith, *I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imaginati on, or ſtubborneſs of my heart, to adde drunkenneſs to thirſt;* an opinion flat againſt the whole Word of God, yea againſt the very nature of God himſelf.

Deut. 29. 18, 19, v.

ſelf. Wherefore he adds
Deut. 19. 20. that, *Then the anger of the Lord, and his jealouſie ſhall ſmoak againſt that man, and all the Curſes that are written in God's Book ſhall lie upon him, and God ſhall blot out his name from under Heaven.*

Yea, that man ſhall not fail to be effectually deſtroyed, ſaith the Text, *The*
21. verſ. *Lord ſhall ſeparate that man unto evil, out of all the Tribes of* Iſrael, *according to all the Curſes of the Covenant.*

He ſhall ſeparate him unto evil, He ſhall give him up, he ſhall leave him to his heart, he ſhall ſeparate him to *that*, or *thoſe* that will aſſuredly be too hard for him.

Now this judgment is much

much effected, when God hath given a man up unto *Satan*, and hath given *Satan* leave, *without fail*, to compleat his deſtruction. I ſay, *When God hath given Satan leave effectually to compleat his deſtruction:* For all that are delivered up unto Satan, have not, nor do not come to this end. But *that* is the man, whom God ſhall *ſeparate* to evil, and ſhall *leave* in the hands of *Satan*, to *compleat*, without fail, his deſtruction.

Thus he ſerved *Ahab*, a man, *That ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs in the ſight of the Lord. And the Lord ſaid, Who ſhall perſwade* Ahab, *that he may go up, and fall at* Ramoth-Gilead: *And one ſaid on this manner, and another*

1 Kin. 21. 25.

other ſaid on that manner: *And there came forth a Spirit, and ſtood before the Lord, and ſaid, I will perſwade him. And the Lord ſaid unto him, wherewith? And he ſaid, I will go forth, and be a lying Spirit in the mouth of all his Prophets. And he ſaid, Thou ſhalt perſwade him, and prevail alſo, go forth and do ſo.* Thou ſhalt perſwade him *and prevail*, do thy will, I leave him in thy hand, *Go forth, and do ſo.*

1 Kin. 22. 20,21,22.

Wherefore in theſe Judgments, the Lord doth much concern himſelf for the management thereof, becauſe of the Provocation, wherewith they have provoked him. This is the man, *whoſe ruine God contriveth, and bringeth to paſs by his own contrivance.*

I

I will chuſe their deluſions for them, I will bring their fears upon them. I will chuſe their *Devices*, or the Wickednesſes that their hearts are contriving of: I, even I, will cauſe them to be accepted of, and delightful to them. But who are they that muſt thus be feared? Why, thoſe among Profeſſors, that have choſen *their own waies, thoſe whoſe Soul delighteth in their Abominations.* Iſa. 66. 4. v. 3.

Becauſe they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved; for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong Deluſions, that they ſhould believe a Lye, that they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs.

God

God shall send them, It is a great word; Yea, *God shall send them strong Delusions*; Deluſions that ſhall do, that ſhall make them believe a Lye. Why ſo? 2 Thes. 5. 10, 11, 12. *That they all might be damned, every one of them, who believe not the Truth, but had pleaſure in Unrighteonſneſs.*

There is nothing more provoking to the Lord, than for a man to promiſe, when God threatneth; for a man to be light of conceit, that he ſhall be ſafe; and yet to be more wicked than in former daies: This mans Soul abhorreth the Truth of God, no marvel therefore if God's Soul abhorreth him: he hath invented a way contrary to God, to bring about his own

own Salvation, no marvel, therefore, if God invent a way to bring about this mans Damnation: And seeing that these rebels are at this point, We shall have peace; God will see whose word shall stand, His or theirs. Jer. 44. 26,27,28.

A Fifth *Sign*.

Fifthly, Another *Sign* of a man being past Grace, is, When he shall at *this*, scoff, and inwardly *grin*, and fret against the Lord, secretly purposing to continue his course, and put all to the venture, despising the Messengers of the Lord. *He that despised* Moses's *Law, died without Mercy, of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy,* Heb. 10. 28.

who

who hath troden under foot the Son of God, &c.

Wherefore, againſt theſe Deſpiſers *God hath ſet himſelf*, and foretold, that they *ſhall* not believe but periſh.

Acts 13. 41. *Behold ye Deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh, for I work a work in your days, which ye ſhall in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

After that thou ſhalt cut it down.

Thus far we have treated of the *Barren Fig-tree*, or fruitleſs Profeſſor, with ſome Signs to know him by; whereto is added alſo ſome *Signs* of one who neither will or can, by any means, be fruitful, *but they muſt miſerably periſh*

periſh. Now being come to the time of Execution, I ſhall ſpeak a word to that alſo, *After that thou ſhalt cut it down.* Chriſt at laſt turns the *Barren Fig-tree* over to the Juſtice of God, ſhakes his hands of him, *And gives him up to the fire for his unprofitableneſs.*

Thou ſhalt cut it down.

Two things are here to be conſidered.

1. The Executioner, *thou*, the great, the dreadful the eternal God. Theſe words therefore, as I have already ſaid, ſignifie that Chriſt the Mediator, through whom alone Salvation comes, and by whom alone Execution hath

hath been deferred, *Now giveth up the Soul*, forbears to ſpeak one *Syllable* more for him, or to do the leaſt Act of Grace further, to try for his recovery; but delivereth him up to that fearful Diſpenſation, *To fall into the hand of the living God.*

Heb. 10. 31

2. The *Second* to be conſidered, is, *The inſtrument by which this Execution is done*, and that is *Death*, compared here to an *Ax*; and foraſmuch as the Tree is not fellen at one Blow, therefore the ſtrokes are here continued, till all the blows be ſtruck at it, that are requiſite for its *felling*; For now *cutting* time, and *cutting* work is come, *cutting* muſt be his portion, till he be cut down. *After that thou ſhalt*

cut.

cut it down, Death, I ſay, is the *Ax*, which God often uſeth, therewith to take the *Barren Fig-tree* out of the Vineyard, out of a Profeſſion, *and alſo out of the world at once*. But this *Ax* is now new-ground, it cometh well-edged to the roots of this *Barren Fig-tree*. It hath been whetted by Sin, by the Law, and by a *formal* Profeſſion, and therefore muſt, and will make deep gaſhes, not only in the natural life, but in the Heart, and Conſcience alſo of this Profeſſor. *The wages of Sin is Death, the ſting of Death is Sin*. Wherefore Death comes not to this man as he doth to Saints, *muzzled*, or without his Sting, but with open mouth, in all his ſtrength,

Rom. 5.

1 Cor. 15.

ſtrength; yea, he ſends *his First-born*, which is guilt, to devour his ſtrength, *and to bring him to the King of Terrors.*

Job 18.13, 14.

But to give you, in a few *Particulars*, the manner of this mans dying.

1. Now he hath his fruitleſs *Fruits* beleagure him round his Bed, together with all the *bands* and *legions* of his other wickedneſs. *His own Iniquities ſhall take the wicked himſelf, and he ſhall be holden in the cords of his ſins*, Prov. 5 22.

2. Now ſome terrible diſcovery of God is made out unto him, to the perplexing and terrifying of his guilty Conſcience, *God ſhall caſt upon him, and not ſpare, and*

Job 27.22.

he

he shall be afraid of that which is high.

3. The dark Entry he is to go through, will be a sore amazement to him; *For fear shall be in the way*, yea terrors will take hold on him, when he shall see the *yawning* Jaws of Death to gape upon him, and the Doors of the Shadow of Death open, to give him passage out of the World. Now who will meet me in this dark entry, how shall I pass through this dark Entry into another world. Eccl. 12.5. Job 38.17.

4. For by reason of guilt, and a shaking Conscience, *His life will hang in continual doubt before him, and he shall be afraid day and night*, and shall have no assurance of his life. Deut. 28. 66,67.

5. Now

5. Now also *Want* will come up against him, he will come up *like an armed man*. This is a terrible Army to him that is graceless in heart, and fruitless in life. This *Want* will continually cry in thine ears, here is a New birth *wanting*, a *new* Heart, and a *new* Spirit *wanting*, here is Faith *wanting*, here is Love and Repentance *wanting*; here is the Fear of God *wanting*; and a good Conversation *wanting*; *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found wanting.*

Prov. 24. ult.

Dan. 5. 27.

6. Together with these, standeth by *the companions of Death*; Death and Hell, Death and Devils, Death and endless Torment in the everlasting flames of devouring

ing Fire. *When God ſhall come up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.* Hab. 3. 16.

But how will this man die? Can *now* his heart endure, or *can his hands be ſtrong.* Ez. 22. 14.

1. God, and Chriſt, and Pity *have left him:* Sin againſt Light, againſt Mercy, and the Long-ſuffering of God, *Is come up againſt him;* his Hope and Confidence *now lie a dying by him,* and his Conſcience *totters and ſhakes* continually within him.

2. Death is at his work, *Cutting of him down,* hewing both bark and heart, both Body and Soul aſunder; The man groans, but Death hears him not: He looks gaſt-

gaſtly, carefully, dejectedly; he ſighs, he ſweats, he trembles, but Death matters nothing.

3. Fearful *Cogitations* haunt him, miſgivings, direful apprehenſions of God terrifie him. Now he hath time to think what the loſs of Heaven will be, and what the torments of Hell will be; now he looks no way, but he is frighted.

4. Now would he live, but may not; he would live, though it were but the life of a Bed-rid man, but muſt not. He that cuts him down, ſwaies him, as the Feller of wood, *ſwaies the tottering tree*; now this way, then that, at laſt a root-breaks: an heart-ſtring, an eye-ſtring ſnaps aſunder.

5. And

5. And now, could the Soul be *anihilated*, or brought to nothing, for how happy would it count it self; but it sees that may not be. Wherefore it is put to a wonderful strait: stay in the Body it may not, go out of the Body it dares not. *Life* is going, the *Blood* settles in the *Flesh*, and the *Lungs* being now no more able to draw breath through the Nostrils, at last out goes the weary trembling Soul, who is immediatly seized by Devils, who lay lurking in every hole in the Chamber, for that very purpose: His Friends take care of the Body, wrap it up in the *Sheet* or *Coffin*, the Soul is out of their thought and reach, going

ing down to the Chambers of Death.

I had thought to have enlarged, but I forbear: God, who teaches man to profit, bleis this brief and plain Discourse to thy Soul, who yet stands a Professor in the Land of the Living, among the Trees of his Garden. Amen.

FINIS.